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'GOLDEN GIRLS.'

A Picture-Gallery.

BY ALAN MUIR, AUTHOR OF 'CHILDREN'S CHILDREN,' 'LADY BEAUTY ;
OR CHARMING TO HER LATEST DAY,' ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.

'ONE OR TWO WORDS WITH YOU.'

I HAVE come to the conclusion that I ought, at this point, to let my readers know the plot of the story. There are novelists—and very great ones—who artfully keep their readers in suspense, about all sorts of matters, right on to the last chapter. Who administered the poison—who used the poniard—who forged the signature to the last will and testament—whether the heroine's father is the good man of high degree, with light hair and an amiable face, or the dark low-browed villain who has been prowling about the piece from the beginning—all these matters are left unsettled, keeping the student in most agreeable uncertainty. To this fine art I make no pretence. In fact, my theatre is not of sufficient size for spectacle and heavy melodrama. I am far more like the travelling performer, who spreads his bit of carpet in the street, drops on his back, shoots his heels into the air, and then, with the assistance of his little family, proceeds to entertain his patrons. Accordingly,

I tell all whom it may concern that this is a novel about marriage. The motive of this piece is to exhibit the singular results which may be obtained by judicious experimenters who plan marriages ten or fifteen years before the actual ceremony can take place. There you have the plot in a nutshell. Excepting, perhaps, a shipwreck and a trifle of bigamy, there will not be an event which might not have happened in a six-roomed house. There will not be a crime which would have cost the offender half-a-crown in any court in the kingdom. The whole affair will be quiet as a minuet. Accordingly, if any reader wants a sensation I advise her to close this novel and wait for my next, when I mean to surprise the public generally. By the greatest luck I have managed to hit upon the character of a young woman who will go right through the Ten Commandments and the law of England, breaking everything, and at the end will—not die penitent, which is really getting worn out—but turn into a respectable elderly female living on an annuity. Together with this there will be a thrilling underplot, all

murders and marquises. I have also in my desk a secular extravaganza, the most fanciful and prettiest ever written; all the babies ride thoroughbreds and leap five-barred gates, and the middle-aged men use pap-boats and go-carts: and besides the original subject, the handling is so facetious that my publisher assures me I am safe for twenty editions. Till these performances appear, at which I am labouring night and day, I advise my sensational and romantic readers to seek their mental meat elsewhere. The present story is intended for that limited class, young gentlemen and ladies who want to get married themselves; and that other limited class, elderly gentlemen and ladies who want to get other people married; and, besides these, for that very limited class indeed who are spectators of life, and amuse themselves with their neighbours' follies. The story is, in fact, very like a game of chess. Here are Jerome Dawe, Daniel and Beatrice Ruddock, Martha Spring, Sally Badger, Major Sanctuary, and his brother the baronet; these are the players. Here are Violet and Mildred, Sholto and Eugene, Hector Badger and Bob Sanctuary junior, Lucy Ruddock and Victoria Sanctuary; these are the pieces. At the present moment, in the plot and anticipation of one or other of the players, each of these young people is to marry a particular person. Will he or she do it? Were the plotters wise enough or too wise? What if, at some juncture of the game, the pieces begin to dispose of themselves, skipping from square to square, while the players, perhaps, are laboriously pondering the next move? Out of such few and modest threads I am to weave my novel of GOLDEN GIRLS.

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. DANIEL RUDDOCK TRIES A BIT OF FLIRTATION, AND DELIVERS HIS SENTIMENTS ON FRIENDSHIP.

MR. JEROME DAWE was standing in his dining-room, his hat upon his head, his trusty stick Shakespeare in his hand, and a paper between his fingers, upon which were written certain commissions he had to execute; for it was Monday morning, and he was off to do his week's shopping. Martha Spring, flourishing a clothes-brush in her hand, hovered about him tenderly; and, as she saw opportunity, she made dabs at various portions of his person with such zeal that Jerome Dawe shifted backward a little each moment, and was making his way to the door by a series of retreating shuffles.

'Gently, Matty, gently,' he exclaimed, as that devoted female, spying a mark upon his left shoulder, pounced upon the place; 'that hurts.'

'Where will you get any one to take such care of you as your old Matty?' the warm-hearted creature observed, falling back a step or two, and taking in the general effect of his appearance. 'There! you look tidy now. Pity such a man should ever go about a sight. Lor,' said Martha, becoming reflective, 'to think of that figure being unmarried! Where's the women's taste?'

'Matty,' Jerome Dawe remarked, with impressiveness, 'the women's taste is not the only matter which goes to determine matrimonial connections. There may be men who don't choose to marry; or again—Jerome was a widower himself, and his first wife had in her day played the mistress over Martha so sharply that her name was carved on that abigail's memory as on marble—

'there may be men who have tried once and have not succeeded, and are not going to try again.'

'And there may be men,' Matty rejoined, resting her clothes-brush upon the table, and, while she stood in this statuesque attitude, gazing at him like a parchment Venus, 'there may be men who will meet their fellow at last, and be happy in their old days, with some one to sympathise with 'em and to mend their stockings, and to tend 'em when they have a cold in the head, and so on. Do you believe now, sir, that matches are made in heaven?'

'Matty,' said Jerome Dawe gravely, 'that is a theological question. Ask me next Sunday, if you please.'

During the course of this improving dialogue there passed in front of the house Mr. Daniel Ruddock. He, glancing through the window, and seeing Jerome Dawe, did not (as we might have expected) hurry in to greet his dear friend. On the contrary, he walked rather hastily away, as if wishing to get out of eyeshot of his dear friend. Daniel generally managed to accomplish anything of the kind when he tried, and so it was now; for, as Jerome Dawe turned one corner of the road, Daniel peeped out from another corner, turning his head this way and that, like a rat looking out of his hole.

Two minutes after, Daniel was standing in Jerome Dawe's dining-room, where Martha Spring was now engaged brushing the crumbs from the cloth.

'Out, is he?' said Daniel Ruddock. 'Dear! dear! dear! What a pity I missed him! When will he be at home?'

'Four,' replied Matty tartly, being a little exasperated by a crumb which was out of her reach,

though she stretched across the table. 'There, I have got you for all that!' which triumphant utterance she addressed to the captured crumb.

Daniel Ruddock had taken his favourite place on the hearth-rug, and was regarding Martha with a crafty look. This look he exchanged all at once for a jocose expression.

'Matty,' he said, stepping forward, and poking her in the side, 'you are an uncommon fine woman!'

Perhaps Martha Spring had experience of Daniel Ruddock's ways; or perhaps her experience of mankind at large prepared her for this kind of compliment. She did not manifest any great alarm, although she coloured a little.

'Goodness gracious me!' she exclaimed; 'how many people say that to me one time or another!'

'No wonder, Matty,' said Daniel, advancing closer to her, while she showed symptoms of dodging him round the table, after the example of Daphne and other renowned ladies of the ancient world. 'Don't go away, Matty; I have something to say to you.'

'Get along with you, do!' Martha said, with maidenly coyness; and as Daniel came near she retreated, until, unluckily, his advance was arrested by an asthmatic fit, which forced him to throw himself into a chair, where he coughed until he was quite exhausted.

'Poor fellow!' Martha ejaculated, stopping in her retreat as perhaps Daphne would have done had Apollo pulled up in mid-chase. 'Pity you don't take more care of yourself—or have more care taken of you. *That's* the fault. You ought to have your blackcurrant tea, and your woollen

socks, and your comforters, and your what-nots ; and many a wife would take care you had 'em too. But Lor, I don't know ! Once they are married to a man they care no more for him than if he was a stock or a stone. There are women that would, though—' at which Martha sighed.

In justice to Mr. Daniel Ruddock it must be said that he was as constant a husband as ever breathed, and, had he been the reverse, it could be by no means likely that he would cheat his wife of any endearments for the sake of bestowing them upon Martha Spring. Long ago, however, Daniel had been under-clerk to a pettifogging attorney ; and, in the service of writs and other minor legal undertakings, he had learned that female vanity can be played upon with great effect, where ulterior ends have to be gained. But when he saw that Martha blushed and simpered he—being not a rash man—resolved to go no further in this direction. For all that, he meant to improve the complaisant mood he had awakened.

'Matty ! Matty !' said Daniel, looking at her in a plaintive way, 'you have been shockingly used of late. I do really feel for you.'

What this meant Martha could not imagine, but, determined not to cast away the sentiment her circumstances had inspired, she shook her head, sighed again, and looked as if she knew all about it.

'After all your years of faithful service—after your devotion and integrity—to have the chance of making your fortune, and *then* to have it all pick-pocketed, if I may say so, and you left penniless ! O, though I don't pretend to be what you call a feeling man, I feel this, Matty ; I do indeed !'

Daniel gave a sympathetic sniff as he said this, and rubbed the corner of his eye.

Curiosity in Martha's breast got the better of policy, and she looked straight at him, and said,

'Whatever do you mean ?'

'Mean, Matty !' he answered ; 'do you know—of course you cannot know—that when those two wealthy children were first left in Mr. Dawe's keeping his intention was that you—you, Martha Spring—should have charge of them ?'

'I never !' exclaimed Martha, holding up her hands.

Undaunted by her wonder and incredulity, Daniel proceeded to lay before her a whole scheme (purely imaginary, it need scarcely be said) which he declared was the original idea of Jerome Dawe. Jerome was to have moved to a larger house ; a wing of this was to have been set apart for the children and their governess ; Martha was to have been intrusted with the management of their domestic expenditure. Daniel easily convinced the woman, who listened with greedy ears, that in a few years she would have saved a large sum. 'Something to marry on,' he said, with a complimentary grin. Besides, Daniel went on to show, by ingratiating herself with the young heiress, Matty would probably secure for herself an annuity when Miss Walsingham came of age. All this was impudent invention, but Daniel knew what he was about. He warned Martha that he had only surmised all this ; still, his surmises were certainties. Jerome Dawe had really formed the plan ; only Martha must be prepared to hear her master deny the whole. She knew his way, did she not ? Meanwhile, Daniel charged her not to drop the faintest hint that she had ever sus-

pected anything. And so, having fired her covetousness, and at the same time fenced her in with secrecy on all sides, when Daniel felt he had worked her on to the right point, he inquired abruptly,

'Who, think you, Matty, snatched this prize out of your hands ?'

'How can I tell?' Matty replied.

'Mrs. Badger!' cried Daniel, with an involuntary eruption of hatred, which he thought not quite prudent, until he was relieved to see an equal look of enmity on Martha's face. 'Mrs. Sally Badger!'

'I cannot bear that woman,' he added. 'Mind, Matty, I am a man of the world. I am what people call a selfish man, Matty. I don't pretend to love you more than I love myself, Matty. I do not wish Mrs. Badger to get the influence over your master which she is trying for. That would be bad for me, and bad for you, Matty; worse for you than for me. You and I understand each other. What is your interest is my interest; what is my interest is your interest. Talk as you will about trust and honour, Matty, there is no foundation for mutual confidence like that. Now, Matty, if you are wise, and silent, and do as I wish, why, you will before long have a fortune of your own, as sure as my name is Daniel Rud-dock and your name Martha Spring.'

Here followed a long dialogue, full of point and business; but as the issue of the affair will sufficiently inform readers of its substance, and as we are tired of this disagreeable pair, we close the chapter.

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH SALLY BADGER SUCCUMBS TO PROVIDENCE—SAMUEL BADGER RECALLS PROVIDENCE—MARGARET ALEXANDER TRUSTS IN PROVIDENCE—AND DANIEL RUDDOCK APPEALS TO PROVIDENCE.

SOMETIMES, when an express train is stopping at a station, we who pace the platform, waiting for the starting-bell, notice the careful driver with a long-necked oil-can, like a tin giraffe, letting subtle drops into the machinery here and there, which are to ease the movement when the train sets off again. To this prudent workman I now compare Daniel Rud-dock, who, for a time to come, we must fancy employed upon the machinery of his friendly little plot. Now a word, now a smile, now a shrug of the shoulders, bolder strokes at times—so Daniel busies himself, through it all contriving the defeat of Sally Badger and the capture of the Golden Girls.

Hiem we leave, and return to Sally Badger's modest little house. Great is the stir, mighty is the bustle, in which Mrs. Badger lives herself and makes her household live. A new house has been taken, of larger size and better appearance, and Sally is working, morning, noon, and night, at furniture and furnishing plans. What bits of carpet, nearly trampled out in the old house, can be cut or fitted to rooms and passages of the new; where fresh must be bought; whether the furniture of the present drawing-room will be good enough for the future parlour; how the drawing-room itself can be most cheaply arrayed in splendour: these are the problems Sally Badger revolves. Day and night wonderful Sally goes about with pencil and

paper ever in her pocket, and when she gets a new idea down it goes ; and she has awful columns of figures on the paper, and the figures get dim with time and the friction of Sally's bunch of keys ; and Sally at last confounds the subtraction and addition columns, and thinks all at once that she has fifteen pounds more to pay than she calculated. Down she sits suddenly on a box, and puts her hand to her brow and feels she had better give up the battle of life once for all.

'Sally, my dear one,' said Mr. Badger, who happened to be at hand on this appalling occasion, 'do not give way.'

'O Sammy, Sammy !' she cried, moved by the pathos of the occasion to confide in him, 'I have made a dreadful mistake. We want fifteen pounds more. O, what shall we do ?'

'Now, my dear,' cried Samuel, almost vivaciously, for he saw her mistake, and his bosom was glowing to think that he, her humble husband, would for once correct and reinspirit her, 'you have added seven-ten, when you should have subtracted seven-ten. Look there. The total is sixty-five; just what you always said, my dear. You never are wrong—in the long-run. The total is just sixty-five.'

'So it is !' Sally exclaimed joyfully. 'O, what a relief ! Sammy, after all I could not get on without you !'

Never, during their married life, had she paid her husband such a compliment. It quite lifted him up. He went down to the bank that morning with head so erect that his friends thought he had been having his boots new heeled ; and when he heard a barrel organ playing 'See the Conquering Hero comes,' Samuel thought that inanimate things

were breaking forth in praise of him and his achievement.

Meanwhile, Mildred and Violet had taken quite a fancy to the Badger household and ways. At first Mildred had been inclined to regard the whole concern with disdain, a mood in which she was encouraged by her maid, who heartily despised the poverty of the people and the place. But gradually Mrs. Badger gained an influence over this singular child.

Mildred was haughty, unbending, and imperious, and both her own qualities and those of her new guardian seemed to prognosticate disputes and dislike. The event was just the reverse of such an expectation. Sally Badger's inflexible and outspoken character inspired even Mildred with awe, but in the awe there was a germ of liking. Mildred would listen with the utmost attention while Sally delivered her opinions or her commands. In every juncture of the little household life, the child waited until she saw what Mrs. Badger wished to be done, and she acquiesced in this with perfect confidence. Sally Badger, without at all judging the child's character, or grounding her opinions on any theoretical views, but moved only by the force of similitude, began to like Mildred heartily.

'That child never disobeys me,' she used to say with warm approval. 'In my sight or out of my sight, I can trust her wherever she goes.'

This was quite true. Sally's dogmatic character had so impressed Mildred that Sally herself was in her eyes the embodiment of rectitude and wisdom, and while more than ever apt to be wayward and haughty with others, she surrendered her will

wholly into the keeping of the potent Mrs. Badger.

It was immense fun for the children—especially for Mildred—to follow all the details of the furnishing of the new house. Mildred went to all the shops with Mrs. Badger, marked her choice of patterns, listened while she cheapened the goods, and actually once or twice managed to correct her in small mistakes of memory. Mrs. Badger received the correction not only with submission, but in a mood of gratification.

'I wish, Milly,' she cried, 'you had been my own child. Look at Hector over there!'

Master Badger was perched on the top of a roll of carpet, deep in a book, and his mother regarded him with despair, and talked to Mildred as if she were a woman grown.

'He never does anything else but read! I believe if the sky were to fall that boy would look up from his book for a minute and then turn over the leaf. O, that Providence had given me a practical son! But I foresaw all this even while he was a baby. You are quite right, dear, it *was* the brown carpet I chose for the little bedroom.'

And Sally beamed approval at Mildred, who felt the honour as much as if she had been a sheriff receiving knighthood.

Meanwhile, whenever it was possible, little Violet was allowed to share in the fun of the furnishing; only, as for the most part she was wheeled or carried, her movements were circumscribed. But she had plenty to say, and would find a similitude for every wall-paper and carpet, likening one to a field with daisies, and the other to a spreading tree. She had the funniest little comparisons for all she saw: a curiously-shaped coal

scuttle reminded her of a gondola, and the shovel was the gondolier. Pealing into tiny laughter at each conceit, and looking so frail, and so frolicsome, and so exquisitely lovely, she suggested the absolutely new idea of a merry angel. But often, in the very midst of a laugh, the little creature would stop and pant, and then put her white hand to her forehead with a weary sigh, looking older and wiser and sadder than a child should,

Poor Sally Badger, weighted by her indolent husband and her abstracted son, tugged and pushed at her furnishing with amazing energy. All day long she was fitting, measuring, planning; and far into the night she sat sewing carpets together, and working out the contrivances which she had devised during the day. She tried to make the meals comfortable, but scarcely ate a morsel herself; and in vain would Samuel Badger, looking up from his plate, beseech her to take 'some support for the system, Sally, my love.' She would be off to her stitching; and Samuel, seeing that she could not be persuaded, would settle himself comfortably down to the table and start afresh. Mildred, as soon as possible, would steal away and stand beside Mrs. Badger, marking every motion of her active fingers, and noting every expedient with which she faced the simultaneous difficulties of floor and carpet.

At last everything was ready, and Saturday night came. They were to move early on Monday morning, and Sholto and Eugene had come in to tea, and to have a game with the little girls. Sally, after a fatiguing day, set herself to muster up such preparations as she could for the evening meal, and, until the table was set and the children seated round it,

her feet never rested. Then she sat down.

'Now, Sally, my love,' Mr. Badger said, 'have a little bread-and-butter. Do you know,' addressing the company at large, 'there are few things more reviving than bread-and-butter—in a quiet way.'

Mrs. Badger sat resting her cheek upon her hand, but did not speak. There was a strange look in her eyes, and a deep flush upon her cheek; and after the meal had proceeded a little while in silence, she threw herself back in her chair, and her arms fell to her side—useless, it seemed, these untiring arms.

'Sammy,' she called out, 'my head feels so heavy. The room is going round. Sammy! I am falling off my chair.'

'Nothing of the kind, my dear,' replied Samuel reassuringly. 'It is only nervousness. If you would try a little bread-and-butter, and some nice hot tea, my dear, you would be better in a very short time.'

'Mrs. Badger is falling!' cried Sholto; and, leaping up actively, the little fellow was at her side, propping her up just as she fainted away. Luckily she had not slipped quite off the chair, and the sturdy lad held her up bravely.

All was confusion. Even the sluggish Samuel Badger grew alarmed and hustled about, and Mildred turned very pale, while Violet, in vague alarm, began to cry.

'I think, Hector,' Mr. Badger said at last, 'if this goes on very much longer you had better run for the doctor.'

'Let me, sir,' cried Sholto eagerly; 'I run faster than Hector.' And, scarcely waiting for authority, Sholto started off, while Mr. Badger, with the help of his son and little Eugene,

managed to move the now unconscious Sally to the sofa.

The doctor lived close at hand, and panting Sholto returned with him in a few minutes. Mrs. Badger had revived before he appeared, and was able to answer his questions. But as he made his examination a grave look passed over his face.

'She must be put to bed immediately,' he said, in a low voice, to Mr. Badger. 'This is a serious case. It is the old story; more spirit than strength.'

'Yes,' Samuel Badger replied, in one of his audible whispers; 'I quite understand. A medical gentleman once gave a similar opinion in my case. His remark was, "Badger, you are not only a sword, and you are as a sword far too keen for your scabbard." He was by no means sanguine of my recovery, entirely on that account—keenness; however, by the interposition of Providence, I rallied.'

'Let Mrs. Badger be put to bed at once,' the doctor said rather tartly. 'I shall look in again in two hours' time.'

It was curious to see Mildred, with fear in her face, standing at Mrs. Badger's side, and not heeding the solicitations of her maid that she would come up to her own room. In these exhortations little Eugene joined with great politeness.

'You know, Mildred,' he said, 'it cannot be good for you to be watching anybody who is so very ill.'

'I don't see what you have got to do with it,' Mildred replied, extinguishing him with one of her fixed looks.

'Look here,' said Sholto, thrusting himself before Mildred in his blunt way, 'Eugene and I must be off. Where is Violet? I must say good-night to Violet;' and he ran into the passage, where, find-

ing the timid creature in silent tears, 'O, don't cry, Violet,' said he, taking her hand; 'you know people are often ill this way, and they always get well next morning.'

'Good-bye, Mildred,' Eugene said, for she had followed them into the hall.

She did not answer, and the two were starting off, when Mildred called out,

'Sholto! you never said good-bye to me.'

'I never did!' he answered. 'I always *do* forget you, Milly. Good-bye. Mind you tell Violet not to cry.'

The two boys raced homeward, breaking from each other when they came to the cross-road.

'Mamma! mamma!' Sholto cried, dashing into the house, 'cousin Sally is very ill. She fell off her chair at tea—nearly off, I mean; and the doctor came, and he says it is very serious.'

Worthy Margaret Alexander went straight to her room and put on her bonnet and shawl.

'We must hope that, by the mercy of Providence, she will be spared,' the good woman said, and she offered up a prayer for her cousin as she made ready. She knew how great a catastrophe Sally's illness at such a time would be; and the good-natured Sholto, alarmed afresh by his mother's alarm, returned with her to the disturbed house of the Badgers.

Almost at the same moment, Eugene walked daintily into the room where his father and mother were sitting.

'Mamma,' he said, in his polite way, but with conscious importance, 'I have news for you. Mrs. Badger is ill—very ill indeed, the doctor says!'

The boy guessed that this piece of intelligence would interest his father and mother, and, in reply

to their questions, he gave them a full account of what had happened.

'Sad for poor Sally,' Daniel remarked, rather late in the conversation, however.

'Why did she work so hard?' Beatrice said harshly. It seemed she cared less for appearances than he did.

'Papa,' Eugene asked, 'if Mrs. Badger got very ill, or if she died, then, I suppose, Mildred and Violet would be taken away, would they not?'

Daniel looked at his son, then at his wife; at the boy with admiration, and at the mother with symptoms of an impending wink.

'There is half-a-crown for you, Eugene,' he said, having rummaged for the coin in his pocket. 'Go and play your fiddle. Aha, Bee!' said he to his wife, as the door closed upon the hope of their house, 'that is a clever lad. He sees consequences, does Eugene. Sally! Sally! you are not so powerful as you fancy. Things are not to be all your own way. Do you know, Bee, I feel better to-night than I have done for six months. Soho, Mrs. Sally! I rather think we shall find means to fit you out, strong as you think yourself. What do you say, Bee, to a stroll over to see Jerome? We might feel our way a little further after this bit of news. 'Soho, Mrs. Sally,'—he could not resist the temptation of addressing her in this visionary fashion — 'you baited your hook. Very good. Your fish nibbled. Very good again. You landed your fish safe and sound, didn't you? Very, very good! But who carried the fish home, Mrs. Sally? Who cooked it? Who eat it? O Sally, Sally,' cried Daniel, falling into a moral vein, 'have you

never heard of Providence ?
Have you never heard that man
proposes, but God disposes ?

CHAPTER XVI.

IN WHICH DANIEL RUDDOCK FALLS
DOWN AND BREAKS HIS CROWN ;
AND MARTHA SPRING HAS A
TUMBLE AFTER.

WHILE our two little Golden Girls lay sleeping that night, twined in each other's arms, as their habit was, wily Daniel Ruddock began to spin a web around them. They might have been two gay little flies, with bright bodies and gauzy wings, creatures framed for sunlight and calm, and he a greedy ugly spider making the snare ready for them, although—as is the spider's way—he seemed wholly intent on lawful business. One wonders what the spider thinks of himself. Does he ever reflect, 'I am a blood-thirsty wretch, living on weakness and innocence ?' Or does his self-knowledge express itself in this form, 'I am a highly respectable and laborious member of society, and integrity, ingenuity, and industry have made my fortune ?' Think the spider what he may, Daniel Ruddock never once suspected that he was a mean scoundrel. His view of human life made it a game of skill, where one player has to hold his own against all the world. Having regard to these tremendous odds, Daniel Ruddock held that, in certain junctures of the game, you must lie to the powerful, cheat the wise, and bully the feeble ; and in this he no more thought himself a wrongdoer, than a soldier considers himself a murderer when he sees the enemy drop to the crack of his rifle. Daniel judged that he was rather a good man

on the whole. The fault lay in the game, not in the player.

Accordingly, he and Beatrice strolled over to Jerome Dawe, and the harmonious pair executed a kind of duet of flattery, extolling the mind, the face, the character, the habits of their dear friend ; always managing in the old way to be tell-tales upon each other ; Daniel letting Jerome know something which Beatrice had said the night but one before, Beatrice protesting against the breach of confidence ; then Beatrice, in laughing revenge upon her husband, declaring that *she* would repeat one of *his* sayings, which she did, in spite of all his expostulation. Each of these disclosures went to show that Daniel and Beatrice believed, in their inmost souls, that such a man as Jerome Dawe never had lived before, and never would live again. Meanwhile, Jerome Dawe, inhaling this delightful incense, became, to drop into a modern comparison, very like a man who is judiciously treated with laughing-gas. His spirits rose immensely. He laughed aloud. He slapped his knees until his palms tingled with the stroke. Altogether, he believed himself to be a pillar of manhood, and that these two people were forced, by the supremacy of his character, to gaze up at him as they did.

It was a picture. The tall imposing elderly gentleman, with twinkling eyes, incessant smiles, and face turning about with delighted rapidity from flatterer to flatterer. The handsome woman, with speech as soft as oil, and not a solitary defaulting feature to show that she was playing a part ; well-dressed, easy in her posture, one white soft hand caressing the hand of Jerome, so naturally that you might have sworn she was doing it unconsciously : Daniel

himself, crabbed, croaking, with serpentine subtlety in every line of his hard face, fawning, joking, and sniggering until, at the wittiest points, the tops of his shoulders touched the tips of his ears.

Daniel at last rose to go. His wife looked at him as if he had forgotten something; but as he did not regard her she wisely concluded that, for some good reason of his own, he had postponed the business of the night. Jerome was reluctant to part with them, but Daniel said they must go.

'In fact,' he said, 'we only strolled out for a mouthful of air, as I had been in the house all day.'

'And for something more,' his wife added. 'Because you were tired of work, and tired of me, and you said, "Let me hear one or two of Jerome's good stories."

'Tired of you, eh?' cried Jerome, enraptured afresh. 'And wanted to hear one of my good stories? Well, perhaps I do know a good story or two!'

'It's your memory, you see,' Daniel said, shaking his head in hopeless envy of that prodigious faculty. 'Good-night, Jerome.'

Daniel was half-way down-stairs, and Beatrice, wondering still at his policy, had said her own good-night, when Daniel came up again.

'By the way, I quite forgot, poor Sally is very ill.'

'Sally!' exclaimed Jerome. 'Why, she was here this morning.'

'She won't be here to-morrow morning,' replied Daniel, with a curious blunt air; 'and she won't be here the morning after that. The doctor gives a bad account of her. I have seen it coming on for a long time. That woman will die, Jerome! Good-night, again.'

Simple-minded Daniel began to

descend the stairs again; Sally Badger's illness being obviously no farther concern of his, except on grounds of philanthropy and relationship—Sally being a human being, a friend, and a family connection.

'Stop! Daniel, stop!' Jerome Dawe called out, in great excitement. 'Don't go away in such a hurry. If Sally is taken ill it will be a serious matter for me. I must talk this over. I must have your advice.'

'He must have *my* advice!' cried Daniel, from a dark depth of the stair. He laid emphasis on the pronouns in jocose comparison of his own mental feebleness with Jerome's immeasurable strength. 'My advice! That is a good one! He, he, he! I ought not to laugh, though, and poor Sally in such danger.'

Whether at this point Fate inserted a twitch of conscience or a false step is uncertain, but the event is simple matter of history. Daniel missed his footing; and he performed the remainder of the down-stairs journey with amazing rapidity, being instantaneously heard in collision with various portions of the wood and masonry; and finally he produced sounds, as if he were sliding across the floor-cloth; and he wound up with a bump, as if he had been skating.

Through accident, or from habits of stinginess, the hall lamp had not been lighted; and now silence and darkness reigned for a moment. Then a door was hastily thrown open below, and Martha Spring, with a candle in her hand, rushed upon the scene. It appeared, from her movements, that this learned lady believed the noise to have come from overhead, for she held her candle aloft, and looked at the ceiling. This being so, and her

progress being rapid, she came upon the prostrate body of Daniel before he had time even to groan. Daniel, moved by fear of being trampled to death, seized her by the leg, which was descending upon his chest like a steam hammer. The consequence of this purely self-defensive movement was that Martha swung with fearful velocity downwards; the candle-stick departed into the air, where it performed a series of evolutions, and finally announced the return of darkness with a crash, as it fell upon the floor; simultaneously the falling head of Martha cracked against the fallen head of Daniel, with a noise as if two wooden basins had met in mid-air, and with such realistic and persistent optical effects upon the patients that neither of them had the least suspicion that the candle had gone out.

The reign of silence was then renewed, like that of darkness, until Beatrice, flying into the drawing-room, came back with a light. A most sorrowful picture was now revealed. Daniel Ruddock, whose reason appeared to have taken an everlasting flight, was still grasping Martha by the ankle, while she, on her part, struggled fearfully, being well assured that she was in the hands of a burglar, and that it was a question of life and death. Even when the dim candle-light enabled her to recognise Daniel, her conduct was still governed by the conviction that he had deliberately planned an act of violence; and between Daniel's anguish and Matty's indignation, and the confusion of their joint faculties, there is little doubt that in a few seconds the two would have been cuffing and scratching each other, had not Jerome Dawe by this time descended to the scene. Like all blockheads, Jerome Dawe enjoyed

the minor misfortunes of his friends, and indeed he was not greatly to blame for bursting into a loud laugh at the spectacle which lay at his feet. He touched Martha with his foot in a facetious way.

'Well done, Matty, I declare!' he said. 'Daniel, my boy, you tripped her up cleverly. You never went down-stairs faster than that in your life!'

Daniel rose, not particularly soothed by observing that even his wife smiled at his woful appearance. Matty, whose temper was acrimonious, got upon her feet with difficulty, and eyed about her, as if looking for some one with whom she might safely engage in battle. But Daniel and Matty, like many incensed persons of greater figure, were forced to smother their rage in their own breasts; and at last, by exquisite efforts, each managed to squeeze out a smile.

This deplorable accident need not have been described, only that it passed into the action of this history. The four stood in the passage, Jerome Dawe, Daniel and Beatrice Ruddock, and Martha Spring, the latter being allowed to remain as some compensation for the indignities she had suffered. The talk soon turned on the illness of Sally Badger, and the probable consequences of that catastrophe. Hereupon Daniel Ruddock became civil to Martha Spring, and with an appearance of accident, which, as a feat of representation, cannot be too highly praised, he gradually opened out, before Jerome and Martha, a well-articulated scheme for the defeat of Sally Badger and the capture of the Golden Girls. This scheme Daniel represented as coming into his head, bit by bit, while they talked; in reality it had been long and

well prepared. Jerome listened with his air of pompous profundity. Matty devoured the whole greedily, and grinned in silent recognition of the speaker's cleverness. Daniel hooped his shoulders, and crossed finger upon finger, and croaked as if he were a human raven; Beatrice stood by, bland, handsome, dangerous. A quartet, reader, a quartet!

And still in each other's innocent arms, unconscious and peaceful, the little Golden Girls lay sleeping.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH SIMPLE SAMUEL MEETS A
DANIEL WHO LETS HIM TASTE
HIS WARE.

SALLY BADGER was very ill. Her labours, her anxiety, and the poverty which aggravated all she went through, had so lowered her system that she sank into a fever, from which her doctor prognosticated the worst. She lay half unconscious; but whenever she roused out of stupor her talk was business, the children, the new house, the furniture, and how soon she must get about again! Only once or twice she added gloomily,

'That is, if I ever get about again at all.'

How unprotected are poor people from misfortunes of every kind! The same penury which had sloped poor Sally's way down to this fever, had also left her affairs dangerously open to the sinister plots of Daniel Ruddock. Poor Sally had not ten pounds of ready cash in the whole world. To furnish her new house she had been under the necessity of drawing heavily upon Jerome Dawe; that is, she had asked him to advance certain portions of the allowance which he proposed to

make for the maintenance of the Golden Girls. This advance he had promised, but the money was not yet paid, and, in fact, the furniture had been bought, and the new house had been taken, partly in the great name of Jerome Dawe. Sally's payments were often behind, and she would have found it hard to get anything like large credit in Middleborough. Thus it came to pass that the house and the furniture were in a manner under the control of Jerome Dawe; and Daniel Ruddock, who well knew this, saw here an avenue to the accomplishment of his great design.

First of all Daniel shuffled off to Samuel Badger, and, with a face of the utmost concern, made inquiries about Sally, winding up this way,

'As the new house is ready, Samuel, and as quiet is so essential for Sally, do you not think that the children—Mildred and Violet, I mean—ought to be moved in? Mrs. Spring will take charge of them till Sally is well again.'

'Upon my word,' Samuel Badger exclaimed, 'that is the cleverest suggestion I have ever heard. It shall be done. Sally will be so much obliged to you. I will go and tell Sally at once.'

'Stay a moment,' cried Daniel, catching the tail of his coat in great trepidation. 'If I were you I should not mention it to Sally. Sick people worry so. Do not give Sally the least idea of what you are doing.'

'Upon my word,' exclaimed simple Samuel again, 'this is a cleverer suggestion than the other. I shall not let Sally know the children have gone out of the house.'

So that very afternoon the Golden Girls were conveyed to the new house, which was glowing with fires, and looking very com-

fortable ; and Martha Spring stood in the doorway, already in her own fancy the mistress of that proud abode. As Mildred entered, the engaging virgin caught her, and administered a hug which she thought would be agreeable to the child.

'Let me go !' cried Mildred furiously ; and extricating herself, she stamped in the hall with passion. 'How dare you touch me, you horrid old woman ! Are you another servant ?'

Martha released the little girl, greatly amazed and incensed at her boldness. Only she vowed that when her authority had been fully established she would pay this impudent miss handsomely for her insulting behaviour. At present miss seemed to have the best of it, for, wheeling imperiously round as Violet came up in her maid's arms, Mildred called out,

'Little, see that woman does not touch Miss Violet !'

And this fairy empress walked into the dining-room, the door of which lay open, while Martha Spring stood in the passage, clenching her fists as if she were a prize-fighter.

At that moment Daniel Ruddock was seen coming up the gravel walk, and immediately Martha flew to meet him, and the excellent couple became absorbed in conversation.

'See how advantageous your position is, Martha,' said Daniel. 'It is not every woman I would have done this for. Nor any woman except yourself, Mat. And why you ? Because I love you, Matty ! Because I love you better than myself, eh, Matty ? Not a bit of it !' cried Daniel frankly. 'I do it because I want your help, and you want mine. And we can each trust each other, because we each want each other. O Matty, that is

the foundation for true friendship, believe me. And what would life be without friendship ? A wilderness, Matty, a howling wilderness ! See what a position yours is. You have not even to give up Mr. Dawe's situation. Only two minutes' walk between the two houses ! You can do your housekeeping over there ; then on with your bonnet and shawl, or in damp weather take your umbrella, and here you are for the arrangements in the morning. The walking will do you good, Matty—the little bit of walking. Walking is so good for the wholesomes. It will add years to your life. And you will have these children for ten years, or more if you play your cards well, and then, whatever happens, Matty, you will be a rich woman ; and riches, Matty, riches, what is life without riches ? Another wilderness, Matty, howling louder than the first one.'

'That eldest girl is a little viper,' said Matty vindictively. 'If it was only safe, I would—'

'It will be safe soon, Mat,' Daniel replied, with a soothing and hopeful air. 'Perfectly safe. Only not just yet. You may do many a thing when you are in the saddle which could not be done when you have only got your foot in the stirrup, and many a kick that would knock you off before you get on—you know what I mean—when you are well mounted only makes the gallop pleasanter.'

'Very well ; I'll wait,' Matty remarked grimly, 'till I'm in the saddle.'

'Do so, Matty. Now mind, you must keep Mr. Dawe up to it. The business part—the house letting, the furniture—I shall manage. It must be your part to see that Mrs. Badger never sets foot on that brass,' Daniel pointed

to the threshold. 'Remember, once she sets her foot on that brass you will be dished, and I will be dished, in fact everybody will be dished. I am now speaking on the supposition that Mrs. Badger recovers; if it should please Providence *not* to bless the means used for her restoration'—Daniel looked serious here—'why then, Matty, all our anxiety will be over.'

'I am not afraid of Mrs. Badger,' said Martha defiantly. 'Sally Badger!' she gave an insolent laugh, 'I shall be one too many for her, I promise you.'

'Well, if you are going to be one too many for Mrs. Badger,' retorted Daniel, with a serious air, 'you must be at least thirteen to begin with, for she would match any dozen women I ever met.'

'Leave Sally Badger to me,' replied Matty. She found an insolent pleasure in this freedom with the name.

'You may talk to her out of the window,' said Daniel, rather uneasy, it seemed, at his confederate's self-confidence. 'But once you open the door to her—However, Matty,' he added, breaking off with a new thought, 'one thing is certain—she can't come here for long enough yet.'

'What does my master say to all this?' asked Martha, changing the conversation. 'Is he agreeable?'

'Partly he is,' replied Daniel, 'altogether he will be. We have to manage that; you and me, Mat. And I have asked him to look in and meet me here this afternoon, about this hour. Why, Mat, as sure as I live, there comes his hat! Now mind, Matty, we must persuade Mr. Dawa. You know what I mean. We must manage him. We understand each other, and we are useful to each other, are we not, Matty—you and me?'

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN WHICH JEROME DAWE, DANIEL RUDDOCK, AND MARTHA SPRING ROAR WITH LAUGHTER.

HAD there been any spectators of classical education to consider Mr. Jerome Dawe as he walked with stately step up the garden, these, marking his awful visage, his magnificent head, his world-subduing stride, and the roll of his commanding voice, might have pronounced him a good modern image of the thundering Jove of heathen times. And if—as is perfectly possible—the thundering Jove of heathen times was little better than a pompous impostor, whose grand display of parts was a sham and a deceit played off on mankind, the instructed spectator would have judged the image absolutely perfect. In fact, when Mr. Jerome Dawe rested Shakespeare in the gravel, and inclined the weight of his body thereon, and gazed round him with an air of majestic contemplation, he might have been Olympian Jove modernised, in stockings and breeches and a frilled shirt, with a trace of snuff on the front of his waistcoat to complete the illusion.

'Daniel, my boy,' said the Olympian Jove, with a movement as if he meant to recover his perpendicular, and, having done so, poked Daniel in the ribs with Shakespeare, 'this is a pretty sort of place. Sally has lighted on her feet.'

'Sally! Ha! ha! ha!' cried Daniel, suddenly struck with a droll fancy, and making abrupt movements of his body as he laughed, until, between his action and the sound he sent forth, he produced the general effect of a sawyer going through a knotty plank. 'Sally! Yes; I see. Ha! ha! ha!'

'Daniel,' said Jerome Dawe solemnly, 'I hope your reason is not affected.'

'Ha ! ha ! ha !' cried Daniel again. 'He hopes *my* reason is not affected ! *His* ain't, that's cock-sure.'

'Matty,' said Jerome Dawe, turning to his housekeeper with some concern, 'can you explain this ?'

He pointed Shakespeare at Daniel Ruddock as if he were a lecturer and Daniel a subject.

'Explain it !' replied Martha Spring, tittering ; 'not I. How should I know the goings on you two have between yourselves ?'

Martha Spring burst out laughing after this playful rejoinder ; and Jerome himself, looking grave and full of wonder for a moment, as well he might, suffered his features to relax, and at last broke into a knowing smile.

'You call me a clever fellow at a joke, Daniel ?' he said. 'A downright clever fellow at a joke, eh ?'

Jerome Dawe put this question not because he had the faintest idea what the joke was, but because he was unwilling to lose praise from any source. 'Honestly now, a real laughable joke, eh, Dan ?'

Daniel began laughing himself, and Martha joined in, and finally Jerome Dawe himself brought up the rear with a tremendous peal of self-approving mirth. The three stood thus, laughing one against the other like *buffo* singers. Jerome Dawe felt that the louder and longer the laughter, the greater the testimony to his power as a mirth producer ; so he resolved to encourage the others, and went on laughing, peal after peal, and Daniel Ruddock was forced to follow on until he could laugh no more.

This prologue having been

finished and gravity resumed, Daniel proceeded, with infinite audacity, to tell Jerome that he had perceived — and that Martha, who still stood with them, had also perceived — that the two girls were to be removed from the charge of Sally Badger, and handed over to Mrs. Spring. That a more suitable arrangement the wit of man could not have devised. That this house and its furniture were, to all intents and purposes, the property of Jerome Dawe. That Sally was too poor to be able to object practically to the arrangement. That in any case her recovery was uncertain. That Martha would still be able to retain her post as housekeeper in the establishment of Jerome himself. That the girls would be truly happy under the regulation of that excellent creature, Martha — he would say it twice before her face — that excellent creature, Martha ! That a better woman, a more refined being, a more motherly individual, a more entertaining and naturally genteel person than Martha Spring did not walk upon this earth. That it was to Daniel a great effort to say all this in her presence. But that where duty called Daniel, Daniel always answered duty. Finally, that the whole of this arrangement, which, for sagacity, far surpassed ordinary human skill, was devised by Jerome Dawe himself, alone and unaided ; a man who could plan his secret, and then step calmly into affairs, and execute his designs without any apparent effort.

From first to last, this mendacious address was delivered with the most staggering effrontery, and Martha Spring acted as chorus, coming in at the end of every paragraph with a fervent expression of assent. Only, when

Daniel spoke of her own virtues, the accomplished lady blushed with honourable shame; and when he began a second paragraph of panegyric, she yielded to the promptings of her natural vivacity, and said to Daniel Ruddock, 'Go along, do!' an address which she enforced by a lady-like dig in the ribs, which dig being delivered in a moment of exalted feeling, and being, by the finger of Fate, directed to a sensitive part, made Daniel sore for a week. However, with this exception, the entire performance was got through with great success, and Jerome Dawe was half convinced that he had really made this fine arrangement in the secrecy of his own capacious head!

'Come in, then,' cried he. 'Come into the house. Let us see how the children are getting on.'

CHAPTER XIX.

IN WHICH A YOUNG CHILD AND A SICK WOMAN ARE MORE THAN A MATCH FOR TWO KNAVES AND A FOOL.

INTO the house they came. And turning into the dining-room, they found Mildred with her maid, and little Violet lying fatigued on a sofa. Mildred was engaged in an argument with the woman.

'When is Mrs. Badger coming here?' she asked, in a passionate voice. 'Little! you must tell me.'

'Mrs. Badger is very ill, miss,' Little replied. She here gave a knowing look at Martha Spring, for the two were already friends, and Little knew there was something in the wind. 'I know nothing much about Mrs. Badger

—and I care less, miss,' she added, with a curious desire to be impudent towards Mrs. Badger and humble to her young mistress in the same breath.

Mr. Jerome Dawe entered the room at this moment, and Mildred marched up to him, with erect step and clear resolute eyes. She spoke, however, with respect, for not only did she know that Jerome Dawe was her guardian, but there was in his manner something which the high-bred child recognised as of a higher note than the behaviour of the rest.

'I want to know, if you please,' she said, 'when Mrs. Badger is coming to this house?'

'Really, child,' replied Jerome Dawe, 'that is what nobody can say. She is so very ill, you see.'

'Does Mrs. Badger know that Violet and I have come to this house?' the child asked, with remarkable energy and sharpness.

Two replies came in the same breath.

'Of course she knows all about it.'

So said Daniel Ruddock.

'Mrs. Badger does *not* know you have come to this house.'

So said Jerome Dawe.

This coincidence of truth and falsehood was a little embarrassing, especially to Daniel Ruddock; but as, by education and habit, he was thoroughly used to lying, and not altogether unaccustomed to being found out, he managed to add, with tolerable composure,

'I meant to say Mrs. Badger does *not* know.'

Mildred stood in the centre of the room with her tall slender frame, and fearless face, a splendid specimen of a little patrician; and Violet, with her wondering eyes set on her sister, made a most striking contrast. Round the two children all these deceitful plotting people were grouped, and not

one of them ashamed at what they felt or saw.

'I think,' Mildred said, looking at Jerome Dawe, 'if you please, we will go back to Mrs. Badger's house.'

Now, it was not in Jerome's nature to make decisive replies; and in answer to this he only said,

'Well, Mildred—we shall see—we shall see what can be done.'

This evasive answer led to a complication. For Daniel Ruddock began to fear that the whole plot might fail, and resolved by bolder strokes to make an end of opposition.

'You have got to stay in this house, little missy!' he said. 'Mrs. Badger is nobody here, and you must do what you are bid.'

It was a fine sight to see the child regarding this creeping fellow with a look of courage and disdain quite beyond her years. Even Daniel felt uncomfortable, and wished the affair over.

'You have no right to speak to me,' Mildred said imperiously. Then she turned again to Jerome Dawe.

'We are to go back to Mrs. Badger, are we not? You want to go, don't you, Violet?'

Violet with her wondering eyes still fixed on her sister's face, and too timid to speak aloud, made a movement of her lips for yes.

'She says yes,' Mildred cried eagerly. 'We both want to go back. O, we are to go back, are we not?'

This was addressed to Jerome Dawe, and Daniel, low seriously afraid that all his labours might be undone by the spirit of the child, caught her by the wrist, and, in an angry voice, said,

'You are only a baby, you! You must do what you are told, little missy! do you hear?'

Mildred wrested her hand out of his rude grasp, and, with a cheek on fire, she looked at him, irresolute for a moment.

'I know what to do,' she said at last. 'I remember what mamma did once.'

She walked to the bell and rang it, and then, looking at the group again, and seeing her maid,

'Little,' she said, 'show that person out.'

She indicated Daniel Ruddock with a queen-like wave of her hand, and so stood in the midst of the amazed group, every one of whom was too mean to be struck by the ludicrous side of the scene. For a moment, Mildred stood with her hand raised, and Violet was just beginning to cry for fear, and even Daniel was checked. But he roused himself, and now, with direct brutality and consciousness of strength, he called out,

'You minx! You saucy girl! You shall see who is your master.'

But little Mildred was not to be left any longer to struggle alone.

As Daniel Ruddock advanced towards her, the door of the room was suddenly flung open, and staggering, rather than walking, Sally Badger herself came in upon them. Fever was in her face, and her whole look was death-like, and so thunderstruck were all the group as, with an unearthly gaze, she looked round upon them, that no one saw Margaret Alexander, who followed her cousin into the room, and stood in the background silent.

'Who—has dared—has dared to do this?' asked Sally Badger, delivering her question with an emphasis which was the more terrible from the very fact that she was visibly struggling against mortal weakness.

She looked upon them all, and no one dared to speak; only little

Mildred walked to her side, and, taking her hand,

'O Mrs. Badger,' she said, in a low voice, 'I am so glad you have come.'

'Who has dared to do it?' demanded Sally again; and, with the fever blazing on her cheek, the awful light in her eyes, and the tremor of her frame, she was indeed a terrible spectacle.

Nobody spoke. Then, with terrific rapidity, Sally turned round on Daniel Ruddock, and stretched out her thin shaking hand:

'Uncle Jerome did not do this!' she said. 'It is you, you plotting, skulking reptile!'

Daniel Ruddock, in his early days, had often faced women desperate through poverty and oppression, and he knew that their rage is invariably too great for their strength. So now, emboldened by the very intensity of affairs, he resolved to stamp Sally down and win the day by force.

'I did,' he replied. 'You ain't fit to take charge of those girls; nobody is fit, except Mrs. Spring. And they are going to be taken off your hands, and this house too, and Mrs. Spring will manage them from this day!'

'Will she?' Sally asked, with a sudden quietude, which Daniel understood to signify an onset of weakness. 'Matty!—she!—will she?—indeed?'

'Yes,' replied Daniel, growing milder for policy's sake now that his point was about to be gained. 'It is kindly meant to you, Sally. You ought to be in your bed. It is all kindly meant. We must do our duty by everybody, and of course you cannot attend to those young girls. Now you go home and go to bed, Sally, and cover up warm, and take something hot. It's as much as your life's worth is this walk, you know!'

'Will you listen to me?' cried

Sally, with a feeble fierceness that was dreadful to see. 'I have made arrangements for the children. I have provided a protector for them.'

'The protector is Jerome's business,' remarked Daniel, growing angry again. 'Jerome can provide protectors for himself.'

'Hold your tongue!' retorted Sally fiercely. 'Uncle,' she said, turning to Jerome Dawe, 'I have asked Margaret, and she is going to take charge of the house and the children for the present.'

Daniel leaped with surprise. Till now he had not observed Margaret Alexander, but, looking round, he saw her calm face and composed attitude, and he knew that all was lost. Sally had chosen her ally well. Margaret Alexander was at this moment irresistible. Jerome neither could nor would refuse the proposed arrangement. Crafty Daniel was utterly and hopelessly beaten, and he knew it; and, with a murderous malice in his heart, he stood biting his nails and trying to cover his rage and disappointment. And supple Martha Spring, knowing how matters would turn, resolved to extricate herself from the complication.

'It's very kind of you, ma'am,' she said, fawning upon Mrs. Alexander; 'I am sure the young ladies will like it.'

This was the finishing stroke for Daniel Ruddock. He realised with renewed rage that his mean confederate was leaving him to bear alone the disgrace and the vexation of the position.

'What do you say, Jerome?' asked Sally, now in a breaking voice. 'You have confidence in Margaret, have you not?'

'Perfect confidence! perfect confidence!' replied that great man. 'Nothing can be better. I am satisfied; Matty is satisfied; and—and—and Daniel is satisfied!'

'In that case,' Sally Badger said, with a last effort, 'we had better get home. This has been too much for me. You can all—you can—all—go.'

And at this word Sally Badger sank down swooning in the centre of the floor.

CHAPTER XX.

IN WHICH IS DESCRIBED A MOST EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN IN THE STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

IT was three o'clock one dull afternoon, and a young gentleman was walking down the Strand. Many other gentlemen, old and young, were doing the same, but our eyes follow this one in particular.

He was of small stature, and the word diminutive would well describe him; for not only was his height stunted, but his feet were small, his hands almost woman-sized, and his features curiously minute. We often see men of short stature, who, by breadth of shoulder, strength of limb, or bigness of head, make up for deficiency of height; but this young fellow was, throughout, a miniature. His face was finical, not to be impressed with any vigorous emotion. You could fancy the lad dancing prettily, or perhaps writing poetry, or composing songs; but the greater activities, the more forcible deeds of mankind, were not for his handling.

Gracefully enough he made his way through the crowd, with an occasional bow of apology as he jostled a passer-by, or was jostled himself. He was dressed with much care, and, though his steps were bent eastward, his dress and tie and gloves were of the fashion of the West-end. There was no-

thing of the City about this fine young man.

While he thus pursued his way eastward, another young fellow was coming westward, on the same side of the street. He was a striking contrast to our beau. Moderately tall, of broad strong build, and with a manly step, so he walked along. It was a good face too, one would say, with latent humour in it, kindliness, and candour; but the marks of dissipation were plainer than anything else. Besides, the young man's dress was shabby and disordered, as if he had put it on hastily; his hat was dusty and unbrushed; he carried a rough stick in his hand; and altogether his appearance was disreputable. With a look of recklessness and uneasiness oddly mingled, and with eyes cast upon the ground, this youth made his way along, and whomsoever he jostled or whoever jostled him, he held his way straightforward, and noticed nothing.

In a few seconds our trim little beau, whose eyes were all about him, spied this other advancing towards him; and the beau, by one or two expressive movements, made it quite plain that he wished to escape notice. He glanced across the street to measure the possibilities of flight; but a great van was passing and the way was muddy, and, casting a fond look at his nether attire, he decided that this movement could not be effected. Next he hoped to pass boldly by unseen, and this he had nearly done, when our shabby figure raised his eyes and exclaimed,

'Eugene!'

And Eugene Ruddock, with obvious discomfort, replied,

'How are you, Sholto?'

In spite of Sholto's shabby and dissipated look, there was in his greeting a taking frankness. He

was glad to see an old friend; glad, with that ready pleasure which shows a warm and companionable nature. It never struck Sholto that he was such a disreputable figure. These honest hearty folks never do understand when they are not wanted. Spruce Eugene could not refrain from considering his friend's discreditable exterior, and he did so with such unconscious openness that had Sholto been observing and sensitive he must have felt affronted. But Sholto, being glad to see his old friend, did not reflect that his old friend might be sorry to encounter him.

The two young men talked together for a few minutes, during which the momentary gleam that had lighted up Sholto's face died out, and he resumed his preoccupied and distressed expression. Then, pointing to a tavern close at hand, he asked Eugene to step in and have a glass of beer.

'I never drink beer,' Eugene replied, with superfine scorn.

'Well, we might sit down and have a chat,' said Sholto, with a heavy sigh. 'I am worn and weary. Nobody will be there this time of day.'

'I think I must be walking on,' Eugene replied, hoping to shake off his friend.

'If you are walking on,' remarked Sholto, not seeing the other's drift, 'I will walk with you.'

'O, never mind,' replied Eugene, dreading the tavern less than the promenade. 'I can wait a bit; let us turn in here. You can have your glass of beer.'

So in they went, and down the narrow sawdusted passage which led the way to what was called the private entrance, as distinguished from the 'bottle and jug' department, at sight of which

Eugene shuddered. Sholto trod the sawdust like one used to it, but Eugene went delicately, consoling himself with the thought that they were going to a retired part of the establishment. To his dismay, when the 'private' glass door was thrust aside, instead of either solitude or respectable company, he beheld an unmistakable cabdriver drinking with a young man whose professional or social position was not discernible by the eye, but who was clad in a summer suit very old and very soiled, a greasy black hat, and a red necktie. This young personage, having seated himself on the counter, gave all who entered a full opportunity of seeing his trousers, shoes, and stockings, which were all very flashy, very worn, and very dirty.

'Have you such a thing as a penny smoke, miss?' asked the young man, who had something of a provincial address.

'Not I,' the young lady answered. 'Here are some two-penny cigars.'

'Good quality, miss?' asked the young man doubtfully.

'They are talked up wonderful,' the young lady replied.

'What I says is this,' the cabman remarked, now taking up an interrupted conversation. 'The Party that puts victuals into my stomach is the Party for me:

"Empty stomach, empty purse,
May be better, can't be worse."

And the speaker drained his glass with the air of a man who had made a display of argument and literature.

'Is this a private room?' Eugene asked, in a disgusted whisper.

Sholto, colouring a little, whispered back in his friend's ear,

'Rather a rough sort of place; but we medicals are not particular, and cannot be. They give

you a roll and a glass of beer here, and I often make that my lunch, you know. What will you take ?

' Nothing, thank you,' Eugene answered fastidiously, moving as far from the young man on the counter as possible, while the young man regarded him with a stare. ' Don't let me hinder you.'

So Sholto called for a glass of beer; and as the cabdriver and his friend now left the place, and the young lady retired to her seat, the two friends were free to converse.

' I have a world of news to tell

(To be continued.)

you, Eugene,' Sholto said ; ' I am so glad we have met. Come and sit down here.'

' I will not sit down, thank you,' Eugene answered, with another shudder. ' I can listen while I stand.'

They retired to a corner. Eugene held his natty cane to his mouth, and kept his chin in the air, trying by his posture to proclaim to any who might enter that he was there out of his element, a stranger and a superior. Sholto, who was full of eagerness to unburden his mind to his friend, did not notice these symptoms, but began to speak.

FAREWELL—GOOD-BYE !

MINE eye's so dim, I scarce can see thy face ;
Yet while the life still stirs in this poor shell,
Stoop down, and on my quivering cold lips place
One last sweet kiss. Farewell, sweetheart, farewell !

Ah, do not say farewell ! For bitter pain
Of endless severance is in that sound ;
Ay, pain enough to daze the calmest brain,
And crush the loftiest spirit to the ground.

Ah no, say not farewell ! It cannot be.
How should I, 'reft of thee, fare else but ill ?
Whisper some word that better may agree
With my lone life, and comfort 'chance instil.

Say, God be with thee ; darling, say good-bye ;
That the dear God may hear thy last appeal,
And the strong Father's presence drawing nigh,
Like balm into my bruised heart shall steal.

Yes ! say good-bye. 'Twill sound as thou hadst gone
A little way across a narrow stream ;
Whom yet again, or e'er I've felt alone,
I shall embrace, and think the past a dream.

O sweet good-bye ! taught by the gracious Friend,
Who, when from those He loved He must remove,
This blessing spoke, ' I'm with you to the end ;'
And so we say good-bye to those we love.

FRENCH COOKERY.

MATHEMATICIANS tell us that there are lines—say, a straight line and one of the legs of a hyperbola—which continually tend to approach each other, and yet, if infinitely produced in length, can never actually meet. The same is the case with modern civilisation. The tendency of contemporary thought and practice is towards uniformity, international assimilation, the gradual weakening of local prejudice, and the mutual adoption of each other's habits. We may believe, nevertheless, that the ways of the world—its likes and dislikes, its private preferences and its daily doings—will never be absolutely universal and identical.

Cookery has not escaped this cosmopolitan levelling and interchange, in the arts which minister to our daily life. As tailors and dressmakers take up and patronise whatever fashion strikes their fancy as good and new, without caring in what country it may happen to originate—Greek tunics, Tyrolean hats, Bernese bodices, Spanish mantillas—so English cooks and their employers give dinners *à la Russe*, and follow the modern French fashion of serving dishes singly and hot, instead of collectively in colossal courses, and cooled (four-fifths of them) before they can be tasted; while France has adopted English principles in the shape of warmed plates, underdone meats (which they cruelly call *saignants*, or bleeding), *tête de veau à la tortue*, changed from mock-turtle soup into a savoury entrée; and occa-

sional high-spiced dishes, such as *poulet à l'Indienne*, answering to Mullagatawnied chicken; and curry, under the pseudonym of *carrick*, or *kari*.

French cookery, always celebrated, has maintained its reputation, we may almost say its supremacy, by conforming itself to the ideas of the day and adopting an elegant simplicity; which simplicity, however, is more apparent than real, consisting not in the artlessness of the details, but in the absence of crowding and confusion in the groups.

Louis XIV.'s grand dinners were like his grand Palace of Versailles, vast, elaborate, complex, interminable, and inevitably wearisome. Dining was a ceremony of state, and not a needless act of refreshment. Such dinners were indispensable to the royal dignity. Consequently, similar dinners had to be set before the planetary personages who circulated about that kingly sun, at however great a distance they and their satellites might be from their great central orb. Those dinners followed the Grand Monarque whenever he set out upon his travels. We can understand Vatel's, the head-cook's, suicide on one of those occasions, because the sea-fish failed to arrive. It was not that the king and his court would not have enough to eat, and to spare. It was a breach of etiquette, a slight to the sovereign, of which he, Vatel, would have to bear the blame. He felt as the Lord Chamberlain might feel, were

Queen Victoria compelled to drive in a cab to go and open Parliament. Vatel was the victim of the inexorably massive and elaborate cookery then dominant. He could not bear the stress of its responsibility. His mind gave way, and he sought refuge in death.

And yet one of the simplest and best of dishes, the *poulet au cresson*, roast fowl on a bed of watercresses, is an invention of the old *régime*. In fact, the king himself was occasionally weary of the ceremonial on which he was the first to insist—justifying Frederick of Prussia's remark, that if he were King of France, he would keep another king to go through the forms of etiquette in his stead. It is not therefore surprising that Louis XIV. often dined in his chamber. The dinner was almost always *au petit couvert*—that is, he dined alone at a small square table. The meal was more or less abundant, as he gave his orders in the morning, either for *petit couvert* or *très-petit couvert*, a very frugal repast. But that very quiet meal always consisted of a great many dishes served in three courses, without reckoning the fruit—a proof that the royal appetite was hearty. Moreover, while eating, he was sparing of his speech, not caring to divide and decentralise his attention, or attempt to do two important things at once.

At a considerably later period, heavy dinners in England were a mark and a requisite accompaniment of social rank. When a wealthy country squire or nobleman posted up to London from his ancestral domain, his dinners, all along the road, ordered days beforehand, consisted of three solid and copious courses, with dessert and wine to match. On alighting, he entered the hotel

between a double line of the members of the establishment; and the bill at each halting-place, we may be sure, would more than cover the first-class fare of an ordinary railway journey. If we contrast all this with the portable sandwich-boxes, the basins of soup eaten at refreshment-rooms, the dinners *à la Russe*, and even the garden 'breakfasts' or 'teas' of the present age, we must confess that our modes both of entertainment and of home nutrition have undergone a sensible and salutary reform.

French cookery—by which we mean Parisian cookery, or the art as practised there, and in the other large central cities of France—is inventive, experimental, and, like ancient Athens, a passionate lover of something new. First-rate French cooks originate new dishes, as first-rate French dressmakers set new fashions. The world cannot go on everlastinglly eating the same thing, or wearing the same costume. Every season, for instance, witnesses some new-fangled salad, ushered in with a high-sounding name, consisting of an unusual combination of ingredients, or with some one ingredient decidedly predominating. This has its run, at first either in a grand hotel, or a fashionable restaurant, or afterwards, generally, at the best tables throughout the town. The inventor keeps the secret as long as he can; but genius is sure to have imitators and plagiarists. The recipe passes from hand to hand, until the *salade à la Gabrielle d'Estrées*, grown old-fashioned and out of season with the departure of blanched celery, is dethroned by another *salade*, *à la bonne jardinière*, the natural outgrowth of cold cooked summer vegetables.

The same is the case with what would be small side-dishes, had

not side-dishes now gone out of date. Every cook who respects himself tries to produce something of his own, bearing the mark of the master-hand, like a picture or a newspaper *feuilleton*. His pride is to have it said about town (above all, to get it printed in a guide-book), ‘To have such or such a thing in perfection you must go to such a restaurant.’ Still better, if it be added, ‘You can get some other thing nowhere else.’ Occasionally, provincial culinary stars acquire a reputation which reaches the metropolis. Having once to visit Cherbourg, we were strongly recommended on no account whatever to leave without tasting a certain artist’s roast lobsters, and also his *andouillettes*—taking each on separate days; because both those delicacies enjoyed at one meal would be too much for mortal palate to appreciate. The same artist’s peach fritters—an other speciality—were excellent; but the first-mentioned preparations were above all praise; people travelled miles to partake of them.

Some of these pleasing culinary inventions are fitted with names whose etymology is far from evident. Take, for example, *subrics* of rice. Had they been rubrics of rice, we might perhaps find a clue to their meaning. By whatever name, they are heartily welcome, especially to families who observe meagre days. The late and great Baron Brisse compounds them thus:

‘Scald a pound of rice, and then boil it in milk, keeping it rather thick. When half-cold, incorporate with it a lump of butter, half a pound of grated cheese, and a few yolks of eggs. Taste and season as required and desired.

‘Pour oiled butter into a small deep frying-pan; put in the cold rice, with its additions, by table-

spoonfuls, giving to each the form of a little cake. Over a moderate fire, make each of these *subrics* take colour on each side. Arrange them in a circle on a napkin, lapping one over the other, and serve.’

We may here note that French politeness, if growing beautifully less on some occasions, has taken refuge in cookery recipes. In the old style, as with us, the imperative mood was used. Thus, for *civet de lièvre*—stewed hare—the directions were: ‘Couppez le lièvre en morceaux’—‘Cut the hare into pieces,’ and so on; just as Mrs. Glasse said, ‘First catch your hare.’ The last bit of literary refinement is to use the infinitive mood; thus, instead of *coupez*, it would now be *couper le lièvre*—a mild suggestion, instead of a command. The words ‘you ought,’ or ‘we advise you,’ are understood, as grammarians say, at the opening of this urbane form of culinary instruction.

Illustration : SUBRICS AUX ÉPINARDS.—Blanchir les épinards dans de l’eau salée; les presser fortement; les hacher et les passer au beurre. Y incorporer ensuite un peu de farine; mouiller très sobrement avec de la crème, les assaisonner et finir par quelques jaunes d’œufs.

Quand l’appareil est bien travaillé, et qu’il a acquis une certaine consistance, procéder pour la cuisson comme il est dit ci-dessus.

Which, literally translated, would run: **SPINACH SUBRICS.**—(You will do well) to scald spinach-leaves in salted water; to squeeze them hard; to chop them and fry them slightly in butter; then to incorporate with them a little flour, to moisten them very soberly with cream, to season them and finish off with a few yolks of eggs.

When the preparation is well worked, and has acquired a certain consistence. (you are directed) to proceed with the cooking as above.

N.B. Spinach subrics, sweetened with sugar instead of being seasoned with salt and spice, make a very pretty dish for the close of dinner.

French cooks likewise imitate the milliners in another of their devices for insuring variety. When they have nothing actually new to offer, they ingeniously resuscitate the old. Paris accepts with equal good grace Louis XV. dresses and Louis XIV. dishes. All it positively insists upon is to have today something different from yesterday's fare and fashion. And, indeed, the traditions of the old régime ought never to fall into utter oblivion. Some dishes appear to resist the lapse of ages. *Gâteau de Savoie*, commonly called sponge-cake, carried to Japan by Jesuit missionaries, has been found there naturalised after two hundred years. The provinces stick more persistently to the cookery, as well as to the costumes, of their forefathers; still, a change is gradually coming over the spirit of their kitchen. As there is not a nook in the land which has not been penetrated by tight-fitting tops and frizzled front hair, so do the *Petit Journal*, the *Figaro*, and other daily publications continually acquaint every village cook with the latest innovations and revolutions of the stewpan.

French roasting is sometimes very bad, and sometimes very good: the first, when the joint is cruelly baked in the oven of a cooking-stove; the second, when the operation is performed by a jack and a spit (or even on a spit without the clockwork jack) before a good fire. A fowl or a turkey toasted in one of those tinned iron

cases, sometimes called *tambours* or American ovens, will come out with credit to itself and its toaster. But an excellent mode of roasting is generally practised which deserves more frequent adoption in England—namely, the plan of roasting in a stewpan over a mere handful of fire, which is preferable to any mode for small joints and poultry, which otherwise are apt to get dried up, and perhaps burnt outside.

Try, as a specimen dish, DUCK, so roasted, and GREEN PEAS. After plucking, singeing, and emptying your duck, cut off the neck close to the shoulders, tuck the feet behind the back, put the liver inside it, and stuff it, if you like (to Anglicise it), with chopped onion, sage, and breadcrumbs, not over-seasoned with pepper and salt.

Line the bottom of a stewpan with a slice of bacon, a few shreds of fresh meat, the neck and gizzard of the duck, a carrot cut in thick slices, a bay (not a laurel) leaf and a few sprigs of parsley tied together in a bunch, and an onion stuck with two or three cloves. Pepper and salt with great moderation. On these lay your duck. Cover the stewpan close, set it on the fire, and let the contents sweat two or three minutes, shaking them from time to time. Keep turning the duck till it is browned all over, then moisten with a little broth and either a dram-glass of brandy or a wine-glass of white wine. Cover close again, and let the duck simmer gently over a very slow fire until done enough.

Meanwhile, put into a frying pan a thin slice of ham; when well browned, moisten with broth, and then pour the whole into another stewpan. Add your green peas to this, pour over them only just enough broth or water to

cover them, and boil them until they begin to fall into a mash.

If the duck is to be sent to table whole, it will be more convenient for the carver to have the peas presented on a separate dish; but if the duck is to be handed round cut up into joints, the peas may be poured out on the dish, and the joints distributed over their surface.

Legs and shoulders of early lamb, as well as small joints of veal or quite young pork, are likewise fit subjects for roasting in a stewpan.

Please note the caution respecting the laurel-leaf. In many English recipes, particularly for sweet dishes such as custards and creams, you are told to flavour with a crushed *laurel* leaf, which is a misdirection caused by mistaking the *laurier* of French cookery-books (also called *laurier à sauce*, to distinguish it from the other laurel), which *laurier* is the true *Laurus nobilis* or noble laurel, commonly called by us the sweet bay—by mistaking this for the ordinary large and shining leaved laurel of suburban gardens, which is not a laurel at all, but a *cherry*, *Cerasus lauro-cerasus*, *Laurier cerise*. The two plants are quite different, and belong even to different natural families. But, in consequence of this mistake, cooks often add a cherry-laurel leaf to their custards and such-like, which communicates to them a nutty prussic-acid flavour, not unpleasant, but which might become injurious, and which, above all, is not the thing intended. For the true bay-leaf is simply and purely aromatic, with a perfume approaching to that of cinnamon. The bay-tree is a laurel, and is a near relation to the camphor-tree, *Laurus camphora*, a highly useful and medicinal plant. The *Bon Jardinier* warns against

the commission of precisely the same error in France. ‘By a not unfrequent piece of imprudence,’ it says, ‘cherry-laurel leaves are employed to aromatise boiled milk, without any suspicion being entertained that too strong a dose might be poisonous.’

In order fully to appreciate French cookery we ought to consider what the French think of it themselves. Brillat-Savarin is too well known and classical an author to be more than referred to on the present occasion. Nestor Roqueplan, the most Parisian of Parisians, who was abruptly removed from us in the prime of his vogue and his intellect, at what his friends called the premature age of sixty-five, held that cooking is not a trade, but an art. The conversation of a first-rate man-cook was to him a piece of enjoyable good fortune. Far better, he thought, is it to gossip with a cook than to hold serious talk with an apothecary. If all cooks were good cooks, apothecaries might shut up shop. Doctors would disappear, and we should keep surgeons only to draw decayed teeth and set broken bones. His ideas coincided with the President Hénault’s, who said that the only difference between Brinvilliers, the poisoner of her nearest relations, and Madame du Deffant’s cook, was that the latter did not commit wilful murder.

According to the same authority, out of France eating becomes impossible. The countries inhabited by the Germanic races are cloyed by a deluge of mawkish sweetmesses, only fit for babes and invalids. Their boasted partridges are proved by experience to be either overgrown like turkey-poults or dwarfed and stunted like consumptive sparrows. Their hares are tall fellows, well shot up o’ legs, who make off at the

rate of forty knots an hour—excellent runners, but very poor eating, and with no proper pride in their appearance at table. Alexandre Dumas the elder, he tells us, never visited a foreign country without its sovereign's giving him handsome entertainment, and decorating him with one of his orders ; and never did he seat himself at a foreign table and partake there of an unknown dish without inquiring how it was prepared. England is the only country from which Dumas brought back neither a decoration nor a sauce—objects which that austere people (remember it is Nestor Roqueplan who speaks) regard with equal indifference. Alexandre Dumas was a discriminating gourmand, delicate, as became a man of genius. Weak stomachs, nevertheless, should be cautious of following his regimen. *Apropos* to which, a doctor one day said, ‘ Put into a mortar, and pound well together, the same ingredients which a gentleman in good health will eat when he goes out to dinner—pepper, mustard, sauces, truffles, meats, game, wines, brandy, liqueurs, and the rest. Make the whole into a poultice, and apply it to your leg ; in no time it will raise you a pretty blister.’ It shows no little native stamina that the grandfathers of the present race of Frenchmen—sharp-set after high-seasoned sauces, great lovers of *ragoûts*—for whom burgundy wine alone represented drink ; champagne, amusement ; bordeaux claret, low diet—lived long, in spite of it, and enjoyed good health, although they every day applied an internal sinapis to their stomachs.

Naturally, Nestor Roqueplan cannot speak of French cookery, and the transformations it is undergoing, without paying a tribute of

respect to the amiable shade of Brillat-Savarin, by insisting on the fact that cookery plays a most important part in life, affecting both our health, our pleasure, and our intellect. Did not Madame de Genlis boast, with the consciousness of having done a good deed, of having taught a German lady, who had received her kindly, how to prepare as many as seven delicious dishes ? To the aphorisms of the *Physiologie du Goût* he adds that the man who takes no thought of the aliments which he ingests is comparable to the pig in whose trough you may mingle anything indifferently—the pettitoes of his own little son, a pair of old braces, a wisped-up newspaper, and a set of dominoes. But piggy, in fact, is no such fool, as natural-historical farmers will tell you.

French cookery has lost much of its originality and its special characteristics. We find no more houses wholly devoted to Flemish cookery, others to Norman, Lyonnaise, Toulousaine, Bordelaise, and Provençale cookery ; and yet France is the country where the pleasures of the table are the most highly vaunted, if not the most enjoyed. Cookery being an art entirely the result of practice, time, and patience—a compendium of observations, whose application is made subordinate to the divers tastes of the persons whom it endeavours to please—it has necessarily obeyed the law of mutual exchange which now governs the intercourse of civilised nations. It has also to take account of the nervous development which the agitations of actual life have introduced into the constitution of individuals.

The first striking fact presented by the cookery in French private houses is the ever-increasing spread of underdone meat. It

may be accounted for not only by Anglomania, not only by the idleness of cooks, who like to get their work over as soon as possible, but still more by the weakness of stomachs seeking to gain strength by the use of natural juices. That is supposed to be the reason why people, otherwise fastidious, bear, with little or no repugnance, the aspect of joints of beef and mutton which look as if they had only been shown to the fire. Their fathers did not understand the conversion of the pantry into a raw-meat safe, and only allowed an approach to it for game, which they ate not red, but rosy.

As to sundry introductions from Germany, they have obtained in France but small success. Sweet preserves, mixed with meat gravy, are looked upon as fanciful ingredients, whose flavour is only fit to tickle the palates of growing girls and sickly women. Our currant jelly, with roast mutton and hare, is not yet naturalised ; a clove of garlic stuck in the former is greatly preferred. But prejudices are hard to conquer, especially with respect to eating ; the French may, therefore, be excused if they are prejudiced like other folk. They have not yet accepted rhubarb for tarts, but only as an ornamental plant in public gardens ; while sea-kale, although highly spoken of year after year in the *Bon Jardinier*, is scarcely known beyond the precincts of English colonies.

Sauces and *ragouts* are included in the art of cookery ; but sauce-making is a delicate performance, which, grumblers complain, like the race of confidential servants, is fast disappearing from *bourgeois* households. The more's the pity ; for a painter who makes up his palette badly, filling it with inharmonious shades of

colour, and then produces a frightful picture, does harm to nobody but himself. A cook, who has done his marketing, prepared his gravies, measured his ingredients, and then has neither a happy inspiration nor a certainty of touch, compromises the stomachs of whole families when he spoils his dinner. For that reason, Nestor Roqueplan asserts, French cooks are the only cooks in the civilised world. Other nations have various notions about the preparation of food ; the French alone understand cookery, because all their qualities—their promptitude, decision, tact—are thereby brought into play. You never knew a foreigner, he adds, succeed in making good white sauce ! But when his shade encounters Mrs. Rundall in the Elysian Fields, will he dare to tell her she knew nothing about melted butter ? Dante, if there, should describe the meeting ; for a row in those regions would be inevitable.

Ever since the year 1857—thanks to Dr. Yvan's experiments on horseflesh—French cookery has been unable to avoid mixing itself up with hippophagy. Horse-steak has become an accomplished fact. Hitherto many people have eaten horse without saying a word about it, and even without suspecting it. Professed *gourmets* have ostentatiously assembled to taste and enjoy that tempting viand. To quarrel with the hippophagi would be absurd ; it is useless to argue with new-made converts ; but the parties who were the most likely to profit by the fancy would appear to be the cab proprietors. After their live-stock was used up, they could convert it into beef. The fashion, however, has quite lost its freshness. There is no need now to discuss the superiority of flavour of this or that

joint of horse—whether the fillet ought to be larded or not for roasting—whether horse liver should be dressed à l'Italienne or in a pâté; and whether parsley, in the nostrils of a horse's head, is as becoming a garnish as for a calf's. In reality, and happily, ostensible hippophagy is on the decline; it may be practised unwittingly with sausages, hams, and especially with tongues; but Paris holds long to nothing new. Horse-butcherery there culminated at about the date of the last exhibition but one, and has ever since been gradually waning, although not yet quite extinct.

During the Christmas week the Parisian population consumes about eight miles of pudding, black and white. Immense consideration and unflagging sympathy are enjoyed by this eatable and its analogies, such as sausages, *cervelas* (flat sausages wrapped in leaf fat), and *andouilles* (sausages made of pigs' chitterlings, tripe, or the white part of calf's pluck, sometimes called the frill). Black-pudding is as old as the Roman civilisation, which introduced it to Gaul under the name of *botellus* or *botulus*. The gourmand Apicius, to whom a treatise on cookery is attributed, gives a recipe for Roman pudding; only his pudding is the *white* pudding. At Rome, during the Saturnalia, the time of unrestrained joviality, garlands of puddings festooned the doors of the *suarri* or *boarii*, the classic dealers in swine and oxen. The custom, therefore, of eating black or white pudding, to express 'What's the odds, so long as you're happy!' mounts to a tolerably respectable antiquity.

In England the extreme of distress is described by saying that a man is so poor that he is obliged to go without his Christmas plum-pudding. In Germany, Spain,

and Italy, saurkraut, olives, and mortadella are the invariable symbols of general rejoicing. In Russia the frost excites national feasting, and open-air cooks fry their fat scraps of meat at fairs held on the frozen Neva. In France black-pudding is the traditional treat—accessible to the poor man who buys a bit at the corner of the street; agreeable to the millionaire who receives it from his estate in the country, twisted round and round in coils like the black python in *Salammbo*.* People of quality in former times did not disdain to give it a place in their figurative language. *Faire un boudin*, 'to make a black-pudding,' meant a poor *gentilhomme's* marrying a rich plebeian's daughter.

The natural history of the *Trichina spiralis* dealt a heavy blow on French-reared pork, in which, moreover, you cannot always place perfect confidence. American pork has suffered even worse, from its reputed infestation by the spiral worm—the surest safeguard against which is long and thorough cooking. The French pig, in the neighbourhood of towns, often lives on butchers' offal, and nobody knows what else besides. It is a singular system of alimentation, which is not without its adopters at home. Certain ham and sausage-makers of Villeneuve (department of the Lot), to set their customers' minds at rest, employed, they assured them, none but *pure meat*. What can *impure* meat be? It makes one shudder to think of it.

Diners out in Paris have often complained that their pleasure is not unalloyed. Few people, when they take it into their heads to give a dinner, conscientiously con-

* A strange ancient Carthaginian romance, published in Paris some years ago, and probably known to few of our readers.

sider the experiment they are making on their fellow-creatures. An entertainer's principal preoccupation is to display his plate, his furniture, and his wife's fine dresses. Nothing need be said of the comical dinner, where you eat mysterious vol-au-vent, red-fleshed turbot, and suspicious game; where the mistress of the house organises at dessert an interminable défile of faded sweets, all whose names she tells you, having purchased them herself. It is a trap in which you are caught, and at which you laugh by and by. We are speaking of the ordinary dinner, which is respectfully bad without being ridiculous; of the dinner called *un dîner de bonne maison*, because it is served by two wretches in livery, headed by another wretch generally tall, dressed all in black, and adorned with the title of *maitre d'hôtel*, who carves the dishes in such a way that all the tid-bits are left for the kitchen.

One of the great sorrows of dining out is the uniformity of the organisation and of the bill of fare. Whoever has eaten one such dinner has eaten a hundred. Nor are English dinners exempt from this reproach. 'Cock and pacon again!' exclaimed the German traveller when, for the twentieth time, he sat down to fowls at top and ham at bottom. 'De English do live on notting but cock and pacon!' Paris dinners out are not more varied. After soup, which is merely pale broth with a few white pasty lozenges sinking to the bottom, 'Madeira!' exclaims, without laughing, a footman, who pretends to believe that he holds in his hand a bottle of the real wine. 'Château Yquem '47!' shouts another mystifier, as if he didn't know that he was filling your glass with a mixture of small Lunel diluted with

Grave. 'Turbot! Caper-sauce! Shrimp-sauce!' You begin to get savage. 'We are done,' experienced people mutter to themselves. 'There is now no escaping the *filet de bœuf aux champignons farcis*.' Then you grow desperate and give it up. You eat a little of everything; you poison yourself with a variety of tiny morsels; you nibble and swallow your viaticum or passport for the other world. At dessert you would be thankful for a slice of plain boiled beef.

One reason why the dinner out in Paris is unsatisfactory, as well as unwholesome, is that so few people keep up a cellar, and that the great majority of dinner-givers buy their wine for the occasion. Now, good old genuine wine will invest a simple well-dressed dinner with a halo of distinction acknowledged by everybody. As to dinners brought ready cooked to the house, it is best not to discuss them further. Ready-made dinners rank even lower than ready-made clothes.

A dinner out is apt to be a failure when its object is not clearly defined. If it is an act of politeness, it misses its mark when the dinner is not good. If it is a party of *gourmandise*, an epicurean rendezvous, it then becomes a serious affair from which ladies are usually excluded, because ladies keep people waiting, never arriving in time. And then they wear dresses expressly made to creep between the legs of their neighbours' chairs. And then they don't eat; they have dined at luncheon; so that the men sitting next them are ashamed to eat. And then French women prolong the dessert and encourage its absurd profusion.

It is related that Lord Lyndhurst, when somebody asked him which was the best way to suc-

ceed in life, replied, 'Give good wine.' A French statesman would have answered, 'Give good dinners,' which implies good wine and something besides, and would have carried out the advice into practice himself. Talleyrand kept the most renowned table of his day, but quite as much for hygienic as for political reasons, in the belief that well-considered and carefully-executed cookery strengthened the health and prevented illness. At eighty years of age he spent an hour every morning with his cook, discussing the dishes to be served at dinner, which was his only meal; for in the morning all he took was two or three cups of camomile tea before sitting down to work. In Paris he dined at eight; in the country at five. After a short stroll, if the weather was fine, he had his game of whist; and then, retiring to his study, indulged in what was really an after-dinner nap. His flatterers said, 'The prince is meditating.' Those who had no need to flatter him merely observed, 'Monsieur is asleep.' The Emperor, who was no epicure nor even a connoisseur, was nevertheless pleased with Talleyrand's luxurious and refined hospitality, in consequence of the impression it made on those who were so fortunate as to partake of it.

The office of dinner-giver to court guests was also shared during the First Empire by Cambacérès, who thereby attained considerable celebrity. He is reproached, nevertheless, by the illustrious cook Carème with culinary ignorance and parsimony. His morning consultations with his *chef* or head cook, M. Grand-Manche, were entirely directed to cutting down the expenses. At each course of the dinner he noted the *entrées* which had not been

touched, or very little; and the next day he included them in his bill of fare. Not, Carème thinks, that cold dishes should never reappear; but in a great man's establishment they ought only to be employed with precaution, skill, and, above all, in silence. In his quality of archichancelier, Cambacérès received from the provinces innumerable presents of eatables and poultry. All these were stowed away in a large pantry, of which he kept the key. They were never served quite fresh at his table; and frequently, when he gave the order to use them, they were spoiled.

Cambacérès himself was no gourmand in the true acceptation of the word. He had a hearty, even a voracious, appetite. Quantity with him was more important than quality. One of his favourite *hors d'oeuvres* was a piece of *pâte* crust warmed up on a gridiron, or he would ask for the remnant of a ham that had been cut at all the week long. He was fond of solid and vulgar things which simply served to fill his stomach. To sum up Carème's opinion, '*il n'a jamais su manger*', he never knew the art of eating.

There may exist philosophers who professedly scorn to bestow so much thought on their daily food. But as we bring into the world with us the necessity of eating something at least three times a day, it is no proof of wisdom, but the contrary, to affect indifference respecting the substance and preparation of what we eat. For it is useless to deny that we all share the nature of the lady immortalised in the nursery rhyme:

'There was an old woman, and—what do you think?—
She lived upon nothing but victuals and drink.'

THE FOREIGNERS.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE, AUTHOR OF 'A FRENCH HEIRESS,'
'VALENTINA,' ETC.

CHAPTER X.

THE RICH AUNT.

MISS LUCIA MOWBRAY, by right of her riches, was the chief person in the family. She was George Mowbray's aunt, or rather his half-aunt; for his grandfather had married twice. The first wife was the mother of one son, the father of George and his brothers and sisters. The second wife was a Miss Dunstan, an heiress, of an old Somersetshire family. As her fortune was settled upon her own children, it all came to her only daughter Lucia, who had never married, and could leave it to whoever she pleased. She was now getting on for seventy, and no one knew who was to be her successor. She was known to have made several wills and destroyed them. She was a woman of many whims. No one could be more generous when it suited her fancy, and when her heart was touched; but she had no notion of managing her affairs on any steady principle. She alternately made a pet of George Mowbray and laughed at him; she respected his wife and laughed at her. His brothers and sisters seldom came in her way. They and their children wrote her affectionate letters; she was friendly with them all, but never asked them to stay with her. That treat was reserved for George and his children, who lived nearest to her.

The Mowbrays generally were supposed to think that if aunt Lucia did her duty she would

divide her fortune among them all, leaving her house to the eldest—a hard-working barrister. But aunt Lucia's view of her duty was not at all certain to be the same as theirs; and she had alarmed them a few years ago by a very eccentric proceeding.

There was an account in the newspapers of a dreadful fever, which had seized upon one of the northern colliery districts. It was almost as bad as the Eyam fever that everybody has read of: the people died by hundreds, and the difficulty was to find any one to nurse the sick or bury the dead. Still, one may be assured that the stricken place was not without its devoted men and women, whose courage and humanity became heroic action when they were called out thus.

Miss Lucia Mowbray sat in her study in the south, and read the accounts of this fever. One of the prominent names among those who were spending themselves in self-forgetting work was that of a curate, Benjamin Dunstan. It was an uncommon name, and Miss Mowbray watched for further news of him. Presently she saw that his work was over for the time; the fever had seized upon him, and he lay hopelessly ill among his dying people. Miss Mowbray was very uneasy; she could think of nothing but this young man, the owner of her old family name, dying alone among coal-pits and blackness and misery. She hardly knew who he could be. The only Dunstan

she knew of was an utterly good-for-nothing cousin, who had gone out unmarried to Australia years before. Being impatient and curious, she wrote a letter of inquiry to the vicar of the town which lay nearest to the fever district, and had his characteristic answer by return of post.

' Dear Madam,—The story of my friend Ben Dunstan is a remarkable one. It is, perhaps, already finished; for I doubt whether the poor fellow is alive at this moment. He is probably a relation of yours. I have heard him say that his father belonged to Somersetshire. But he was not likely to make himself known to you, for Ben, though certainly a poor relation, is not one of the sort that comes to beg. He was born in Western Australia, where his father and mother died. Ben was then sixteen and friendless. He packed up his small fortune in a belt round his waist, worked his way home to England on board various ships, and made straight for Cambridge, where he lived for two years in a garret, working night and day. By this time he knew more than many dons, for his one idea from his cradle has been to educate himself, and he has an astonishing memory. My brother, who is a tutor at Wolsey, got hold of him and gave him a few hints, after which Ben went in for a Wolsey scholarship, and got it easily. After leaving college he came to his present curacy at Forest Moor; but the climate is too cold for him, and his health was spoilt before these trying times came upon him. Now he is dying in harness like a brave soldier. Though his life has not been rosy, I never heard him once complain, or suggest that he might have been better used. He

has made a fight for it, and I honour the fellow, and am sorry that your interest in him was not awakened before it was too late, which I fear is the case now. But Ben was never the man to hunt up his rich connections. As to his present position, he has neighbours' fare, and that is not luxurious. I would go to him myself; but I was always clumsy about nursing; and other claims—those of my wife and children, and my large parish—must come before those of poor Ben and his infectious fever. I shall be glad to answer any further questions, or to carry out your wishes in any way.—Believe me yours truly,

' JOHN SMITH.'

' Poor dear fellow! He is Robert's son, of course, though why on earth they called him Benjamin!' exclaimed Miss Mowbray to her nephew George, who was at breakfast with her when she received this letter. ' What can I do for him? I can't send anybody, and I can't have him here; but I must do something.'

' You can have him here as soon as they can move him safely,' said George, with cheerful unworldliness.

' Of course I can. I must write at once to this worthy Mr. Smith, and tell him so. I hope he isn't dead, for I feel as if he would interest me.'

' The young fellow! O no, he won't die,' said George.

He did not repent of his suggestion, though his wife lifted her eyebrows when she heard of it—not even when Ben Dunstan, well on in his recovery, came and stayed the whole winter with Miss Mowbray at Croome Court. He was an odd creature, rough, grave, and yet cheerful, with broad and Radical ideas which did not at all suit the neighbourhood.

His manners were considered detestable, and nobody liked him much except Miss Mowbray herself, and George with his wide sympathies.

In the spring he declared himself quite well, and escaped back joyfully to his old work at Forest Moor. He held on there for two or three more years, suffering constantly from the cold north-country air, after which the Rector of Croome went away to a better living, and Miss Mowbray, to most people's consternation, offered Croome to her cousin Ben. He was not much obliged to her, for he disliked the people and ways of the south; but after all it seemed weak to stay where he was and die in three or four years, as the doctors prophesied. So he accepted Miss Mowbray's offer, and came down to Croome.

'I sha'n't stay here all my life, you know,' was the first thing he said to her.

'Nobody asked you to do that,' said Miss Mowbray. 'Stay as long as you can bear us.'

Ben Dunstan had now been at Croome two years. He was quite strong again, and was beginning to grow restless. The best of the people down there liked him better than at first, though he did not try to please them; he did his duty in an uncompromising sort of way, and the civil manners of the south were wasted upon him. The labourers seemed to him a poor, dull set, abjectly contented, or else afraid to speak their minds. Miss Mowbray declared that the Rector had spent a whole afternoon trying to make her gardener strike for higher wages, and then had come in to call on her, muttering,

'Wretch, whom no sense of wrongs can rouse to vengeance,
Spiritless outcast!'

Ben Dunstan made a habit of

coming to see Miss Mowbray between four and five on Sunday afternoon, when his service in church was over. He was always happiest on Sundays; it was his holiday, and the only day on which he seemed able to enjoy the lovely country he lived in. The high rocky fields with their wide blue distances, the deep lanes and romantic valleys, coloured red, gray, and green, with here and there a picturesque half-hidden cottage, like a nest of stones and thatch, were not quite so desolate to him as on week-days. He used to walk down from his pretty rectory to the Court, if one must confess it, with a pipe in his mouth and a rose in his button-hole, a white fox-terrier, his dearest friend, keeping close at his heels. Such ways as these made people say that he was neither clerical nor gentleman-like. In his dress, too, he consulted comfort more than correctness. But, you see, he was a young man from the Black Country, springing originally from Australia—a person quite sure to be out of place in a really respectable English parish.

So, one summer Sunday afternoon, he came in this guise down the hill. Croome Court lay in a hollow by the river, far below the level of the church and rectory. It was a large old house, which had once been much larger. The Dunstans, unlike their descendant Miss Mowbray, had been a prudent race, and had pulled the place down by degrees to lessen their expenses. One of them had built a mill quite close to the Court—so near that its buildings were only divided from the garden by a high wall and a row of elm-trees. The road passed not far from the front of the house, which had an air of Queen Anne. Its lower windows were arched with thick branches of

wistaria, and the smooth lawn in front was bright with flowers. The rest of the garden, with the stable-yard behind it, was away to the right of the house ; the mill, hidden by stately old trees, was on the left. All this lay between the road and the little river, which wandered away into meadows where old thorn-bushes clustered, and forest trees were scattered here and there. Miss Mowbray had let the mill and the farms, and all the land up to her gates. She had no taste for farming, but cared a good deal for her garden, where the flowers grew as if they returned her affection.

People said that her life must be very dull ; if so, it was her own fault. But she was an odd woman, and did not love her neighbours much ; and very few of them were capable of understanding her. Her eldest nephew, the barrister, said that aunt Lucia ought to have lived in London, where she would have been both amused and appreciated. Once or twice she had talked the subject over with him seriously, but she went on living comfortably at Croome.

Her drawing room was a very large square room, full of pretty things and comfortable old-fashioned furniture. She always lived in it ; her books and work were scattered about on tables and sofas, and her favourite plants were in a conservatory outside one of the windows. There were several large mirrors, before which she sometimes stopped to look at herself. This was a habit that the young Mowbrays thought quite dreadful in a great-aunt nearly seventy. Their father told them that a little vanity was not a bad thing in a woman, and that he remembered aunt Lucia the most fascinating of women.

'She's that still, in my opinion,' he said chivalrously.

'O papa !' howled a chorus.

'Yes, you cuba,' said Mr. Mowbray, 'with your red hands and burnt faces, do you suppose beauty and elegance come to a woman entirely in spite of herself ?'

'Why, there's Polly !' cried one of the younger girls. '*She* never looks in the glass.'

'O, doesn't *she*?' said Mr. Mowbray, smiling.

'Well, she won't when she's aunt Lucia's age.'

'Probably not, if she never does now.'

When the Rector came in that afternoon, Miss Mowbray was watering her ferns in the conservatory. He took the watering-pot and finished them for her ; then they went back into the wide shady drawing-room, and Ben, who was hot and tired, threw himself into an armchair. Miss Mowbray looked at him, and smiled kindly. It was a mystery why these two people should like each other so much, they were such an utter contrast in everything.

Ben Dunstan was a very solid-looking young man. He was rather short, broad, and square ; even his face was square, with a most decided chin. His forehead was low and broad, and he had a habit of frowning ; his hair had a tendency to curl, not prettily, but stiffly and obstinately. His eyes alone brightened up a heavy and grave face ; they were very intelligent, of a lively hazel colour, with the light rim round the iris that gives a certain flash and spirit to some people's glance. There was nothing refined about Mr. Dunstan's appearance ; he was only not coarse-looking ; his father might have been a blacksmith or a wagoner. He was a man, that

was all, with a will and a character, accidentally born a gentleman.

It may seem strange to draw a comparison between a young man and an old woman, but it was still more strange that those two should be relations. Miss Lucia Mowbray was tall, slight, delicate, made altogether after the fashion of an aristocrat. Though she stooped a little, her pretty shoulders still retained their grace. She was like a lovely piece of thin old china. Her face was wonderfully pretty, as well in expression as in features ; it was all life and fun, gentleness, cleverness, with a touch of irony ; when she smiled, it was like a spirit breaking through the thinnest veil of material. With all this, there was a glance in her large blue eyes—they were still young—which gave one the idea of a not very sensible woman. Her strong-minded severe great-nephews and nieces thought she was very silly ; but young people cannot always understand the youth of old age. She had none of what one may call the airs of an old woman—I mean the authority, the taking a certain position proper to grandmothers and great-aunts and old ladies generally, especially rich ones. And this was not because she had never married. Lucia Mowbray would have been exactly the same woman if she had been married three times over. She had her own graceful, careless, simple, unaffected ways ; she acted according to her humours ; she often wore clothes that orthodox people thought too young for her ; she sat in no special chair, had a hundred little fancies, and was always wandering about the house and garden. She was idle, and yet occupied ; thoughtless, and yet kind-hearted ; full of faults

and inconsistencies, and yet charming.

Mr. Dunstan began to talk to his patroness about parish matters. There were two or three old charities at Croome, endowed by his ancestors, which it was his dearest wish to sweep entirely away ; they pauperised the people, he said, and were quite out of date.

'A great many of our people would be in the workhouse without them,' said Miss Mowbray.

'So they tell you, of course. But I know that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it is a man's own fault if he comes to the workhouse. Give him fair wages, let him be industrious and saving, and don't starve his soul by giving him alms—he will be all right enough. These doles are enough to ruin the morals of a whole parish, and they have done their work uncommonly well at Croome.'

'What nonsense you talk !' said Miss Mowbray ; 'the people are poor, and one must help them. These charities are a blessing to them.'

'No, a curse. The system is bad from its foundation.'

'That does not signify to me,' said Miss Mowbray.

'I should have thought it did.'

'No ; I think the founders of these things were probably much wiser than I am, and I would rather plant things than pull them up.'

'Of course, planting is a very fine thing ; but—'

'You think I have not done much in that way ? Why, I have planted *you*, and now you can't find room for yourself in the parish without pulling up all the institutions older than yourself. What a restless spirit you are ! Grow, can't you, and let the old roots alone. The soil of England

is full of them ; you won't find a clear place for yourself !'

' That notion of being planted is a very awful one,' said Ben, looking at her gravely. ' It won't do at all. That was partly what I wanted to talk to you about. If I can't do anything here, you know, that settles the question. I had better go at once.'

' Because of the charities ?'

' Not entirely,' said Ben, ' though you know my objection to all those old things. But I am doing no good here. I preach my very best to the people ; they don't listen—they gape and snore. If they do hear a few words, they go home and say, " Never heard a parson talk a that'ns." I never shall get used to their humbugging ways. " Please, zur—" I'm sick of the sound of it. When I gave them those science lectures last winter, they thought it was witchcraft. They are sly, too ; they say and do things behind one's back. You are never sure you have got at the worst of them.'

' You are tired of not being appreciated ?' said Miss Mowbray.

' I wish it was only that—I could manage that sort of tiredness. But don't you see—besides my character, and ways, and teaching being quite unsuited to them, it is simply a waste of strength. Here am I,' said Ben, stretching out his arms, ' a great powerful fellow, with a loud voice that would fill any church, and a taste for work among masses of people. This little place has been a rest to me, of course. I should most likely have died if I had not come here. I don't forget that, I assure you. I'm very thankful for all that.'

' Don't let me hear of anything so degrading and soul-starving as thankfulness,' said Miss Mowbray, turning away, and putting up her hands.

The Rector smiled. He was used to this sort of teasing, and apparently rather liked it. As he was silent Miss Mowbray became more serious. She took a chair near him, and looked at him with an air of thoughtful consideration.

' You want to go away, then ?' she said. ' Is there nothing that would keep you here ? I would rather have you than any one else.'

' Thank you. But I cannot see that I am of any use to you.'

' No, certainly you are not. In fact, you are troublesome ; you put all sorts of inconvenient things into one's head. And of course it is your duty to go away, as you don't like the people. I understand that. You would not do anything so disagreeable to me, unless you really felt it was your duty.'

Ben sat looking at her with a slow, quaint smile. ' When you put it in that way—' he began.

' No,' said she, ' I don't put it in that way. It is unfair and selfish. But I shall be sorry for myself and all these poor creatures, if we lose you. If there is anything I can do to keep you here, I will do it. I will, really.'

' You are very good, but I would rather not be bribed,' said Ben. ' There are lots of men who would suit you and the place better than I do. I told you when I first came that I should not spend my life here. I have had no reason at all to alter that intention. I have tried my hand at it, and it won't do. I am the square man in the round hole. You won't dispute that, at least ?'

' Sticking firmly to truth, I don't think I can,' said Miss Mowbray. ' But still, my square friend, I think you might adapt yourself. This country is good for you physically, if not mentally. Shall I give you a prescription for getting rid of your restlessness ?'

'If you like.'

'Marry.'

Ben whistled rather ruefully, and shrugged his shoulders.

'Don't you like the idea?' said Miss Mowbray.

'I never thought about it much. I am not fond of ladies' society, as you know; and a clergyman's wife is generally a hindrance to him.'

'Nonsense!'

'Well, I wonder what I should have done at Forest Moor with a wife and six small children hanging on to me.'

'You would have learnt the meaning of self-sacrifice,' said Miss Mowbray. 'However, this is not a savage place like Forest Moor, but a nice healthy village with a house much too large for a bachelor. So don't argue in that silly way. And don't speak rudely of women in my presence, if you wish me to respect you. Did you never see any one you would have liked to marry?'

'I have seen one woman that I admired,' said Ben gruffly. 'But I might as well whistle for the moon. And she is too ornamental for every day, besides. That is the worst of it. If a poor parson marries at all, it ought to be some one who can bake and sew, and trudge about and rough it altogether as he does himself. To marry a fine lady would be simple ruin. Not that she is a fine lady, but she has been petted and cared for all her life. And as the other kind of woman does not attract me, I had better make up my mind to stay as I am.'

'Ah! and you don't like to trust yourself to stay in her neighbourhood, with the chance of seeing her every month or two, and feeling obliged to make yourself out as bearish as possible, for fear she might take a fancy to you.'

'Men are funny things, truly,' said his cousin.

'What are you talking about?'

'I thought that was it. Poor Ben! But I don't see why you should give it up as a hopeless case. I have no objection to your marrying Pauline. On the contrary, I should rather like it.'

'Thank you,' said Ben, frowning, and looking on the ground. 'But that does not make much difference, I'm afraid.'

Miss Mowbray lifted her eyebrows. 'Doesn't it?' she said, with a little laugh. 'Then what are the obstacles? Why shouldn't you? Do you think she would say no? You are too modest; you have too little confidence in yourself.'

'Well,' said Ben, 'when one looks at it reasonably, it does not seem clear that she would refuse one. She may be ambitious, I don't know; but it is a large family, and her father and I are good friends. I think I could make her as comfortable as she is at home. She would be well looked after, but I should give up everything I have lived for hitherto. You can't give your whole heart to two things at once. There is nothing truer than that.'

Miss Mowbray nodded and smiled. 'I withdraw my accusation,' she said. 'I see you have some confidence in yourself. But I want to talk to you seriously. As I know your very best secret, we may as well be quite candid with each other. Do you think people are ever mistaken in what they call their duty?'

'Not often, if they are honest,' said Ben.

'Don't you think that circumstances may alter, and duties with them? If you owned this property, for instance, would you think it right to go off and work at Forest Moor, and spend all

your money on the people there? Wouldn't you consider that Croome had some claims upon you? Now suppose I was to die to-morrow, and that everything was left to you—what would you do?

'Is that a fair question?' said Ben, with a grim smile. 'I might spoil my prospects by the answer.'

'Don't joke, now. I wish to be serious.'

'You will allow that a man has a perfect right to do as he likes with his own.'

'Yes; but a man's right is not always his duty. You talk so much about duty. What would it be in that case?'

'To begin with, I hope you will do no such thing,' said Ben. 'Parson and squire in one seems to me a hopeless muddle. I have no love for the place because my ancestors lived in it, rather the contrary. I should build new schools, get a Board established, drain some of the low meadows, and then go away. I should feel that I had done my duty by the place, if I let or sold it to a good man. I should present some honest fellow to the living, and then wash my hands of the whole affair.'

Miss Mowbray gazed at her cousin, half in surprise, half in amusement.

'You have no wish to be a rich man, then?' she said, after a minute or two.

'Yes, I should like well enough to have money,' answered Ben. 'But not hung round my neck in the shape of land.'

'How tiresome you are! I shall leave it to Pauline, and tie it up so that you can't get at it for your philanthropic craze.'

'Yes, leave it to her, and then it will be out of my way altogether. Not that we have either of us any right to it.'

'Nobody has. Yours is the best, because you have the old name, though you don't value that as you ought.'

'No, I don't, except for one reason. I must go now,' said Ben, getting up from his comfortable chair. 'We have had rather an odd sort of talk, it seems to me.'

He gave himself a slight stretch and shake, like a dog roused up. He had been sitting in the same attitude all the time, while Miss Mowbray, who was never still for more than three minutes, moved from place to place about the room.

'Yes, rather odd,' said she, 'and one I am not likely to forget. No one ever threatened me with selling Croome Court before.'

Ben smiled. 'If you are looking out for some one to leave it to, why don't you choose George Mowbray? He is very fond of the place. It would be fairer, on the whole, than leaving it to one of his children—a girl, too, who might marry anybody.'

'No. I have my reasons for not doing that. Dear George is something of a fool, and his wife is a worldly woman.'

'You are hard on them, I think. Good-bye.'

'Don't go yet,' said Miss Mowbray. 'I had a letter this morning, which you may read, if you like.'

The letter was from Mrs. Mowbray, and dated from Tourlyon.

'What, they are with all those French people still?' said Ben.

'Yes; they will come back quite foreign.'

Mrs. Mowbray never told aunt Lucia anything that she thought would displease her, but a letter from Tourlyon could not help being full of Gérard de Maulévrier, and the approaching visit to his château. Pauline's mother could only say of her that she was per-

factly happy, and felt as if she was living in a story-book. Mrs. Mowbray herself would not be very sorry to see England again. She supposed that, on leaving Maulévrier, they would extend their tour, and visit some more towns, so that they were not likely to be back for a month or so.

This letter gave the Rector something to think about. He walked away from the Court more slowly than usual, lost, as it were, in a wood of châteaux and marquises. He crossed the bridge by the mill, and followed the footpath across low green meadows, along by the hedge of thickly-waving cornfields, gradually climbing the hill. The church stood on a high ledge of ground at the head of a wild rocky valley. Its white spire was backed up by a fir-wood, beyond which was the rectory, a pretty gabled house in a garden. The house was covered with clematis and roses. It had a large shady porch, and the rooms in it, though very plainly furnished, were as civilised as if their owner had been a man of artistic taste, instead of a plain rough fellow like Ben Dunstan.

CHAPTER XI.

THROUGH THE FOREST.

FRANÇOISE DE BRYE need not have been anxious about the keeping of her secret, for Pauline, after all, did not even find strength to tell her mother. It would have been hardly possible to do so without betraying a feeling that now filled her with pain and shame. This happy spoiled child, used only to the summer days of life, loved, admired, and considered first by all her own people, had never imagined the possibility of such a self-deception as this. She was too generous to blame Gérard;

besides, on second thoughts, she told herself plainly that only a fanciful idiot could have misunderstood him. How could she so easily have forgotten the difference in mind and manners between him and her countrymen? The idea of fancying that a Frenchman was in love with one, because he was charmingly polite and a little sentimental! Pauline laughed at herself, and felt very hard and cool about it; yet her heart was dreadfully sore, and she could not trust herself to tell her mother of the engagement.

She lay awake that night full of self-reproach and self-pity; this would push in, in spite of the sternest resolutions. It was very sad, the finding out suddenly that one was a stranger in this land, and must not expect to have any real interest here. Only a passing spectator, a mere tourist, foolish enough to lose her heart where nobody cared to find it. Her eyes were hot and dim with tears. Presently, in a sudden fit of home-sickness, she got up, and began a letter to aunt Lucia in England, full of longings to be back again. Aunt Lucia might often be very provoking; but Pauline knew that she loved her, and those visits to Croome Court, which the young Mowbrays were accustomed to call 'duty visits,' seemed now to this desolate exile times of perfect safety and repose. Aunt Lucia had not approved of the tour, except for one reason—that it would teach Pauline to value her own country. The Rector, who had walked in just then, and who always took advantage of his position to say tiresome things, had agreed with her, adding some ignorant jokes about Frenchmen and frogs. Pauline had thought them both very stupid and disagreeable. But now she forgave aunt Lucia, who,

after all, knew something of the world, and reminded herself of the Rector's goodness, not to say heroism. He was not ornamental, certainly ; but there was no deception in him.

With this kind thought of her English admirer, who would have been thankful to know it, Pauline found herself getting very sleepy, and thought she had better perhaps leave the letter to be finished another time. Kind Nature, which was given to blessing Pauline, sent her to sleep as soon as her fair head touched the pillow.

When she awoke, Mrs. Mowbray was standing dressed by her side ; the sun was shining, the church-bells were ringing ; all the gay morning noises of Tourlyon were going on in the streets. Mrs. Mowbray kissed her child, who woke smiling, but almost immediately sighed and said, ‘After all, mother, I wish we were going home to-day instead of to Maulévrier.’

‘Why ? are you a little homesick ?’ said Mrs. Mowbray cheerfully. ‘I know the feeling too ; but it will be great fun, and we shall have so much to talk about afterwards.’

‘Yes,’ said Pauline, and she did not go on to any explanations.

Of course one could not change one’s plans now without some tolerable reason. Everything was just the same, except her own silly feelings, which must be hidden from everybody ; and she was thankful for the French girl’s confidence, which had waked her in time from a dangerous, foolish dream. In the light of morning she felt braver and less morbid. She read over the half-written letter to aunt Lucia, smiled, and tore it up, wondering a little at her own childishness.

Madame de Maulévrier’s large carriage received them all—the Marquis and his three English friends, now become his guests. They drove away into the country, first along a straight smooth road bordered by lines of tall poplars, beyond which were green meadows and apple orchards. The road grew wilder as they went on, climbing out of the valley of the Yonne. For some time they kept along the side of a steep slope, the descent from the forest lands into the plain. Above them lay a broad belt of stony ground and heather, with goats climbing about, watched by gipsy-looking children, and here and there a patch of vineyard fenced with turf and stones. Below, on the other side of the broad even road that skirted the hill, long green slopes, varied with trees, with a small field of corn or colza, a farmhouse, or a group of dirty picturesque cottages, ran down into the low ground. The road itself was bordered on this lower side by great Spanish chestnut-trees, whose stately growth and beautiful shining leaves gave the whole foreground a look of dignity. Between and over them one caught glimpses of the plain, with here and there a sparkle of water, with white church-spires and the soaring roofs of châteaux, and blue hills far away. Tourlyon was left behind farther down the valley ; but by looking back one could still catch sight of its crowding towers, faint and gray against the misty horizon.

Further on they drove through miles of pine forest, where the road was soft and heavy, where the sun gleamed through the red stems, and the wind above sighed and rushed gently, like a summer sea. Then other woods, chiefly of oak and delicate silver birch, all made glorious by the tall wav-

ing plumes of golden broom that grew high up among the trees, and then fell in bright showers across the dark background. Among the fir-woods there were strange sandy places, where the road cut through yellow rocks all tufted with fern and blooming purple heather. It was all wild, luxuriant, and lonely; cheerful enough on a sunny afternoon like this, but full of suggestions of dreariness.

As they drove deeper into these forests, where the only sound of human life was the jingle of their harness-bells, Gérard talked a good deal and told them stories. They all listened eagerly, Mr. Mowbray and Pauline quite carried away by these romantic scenes and their histories. Mrs. Mowbray, though by no means a nervous woman, was almost alarmed at finding herself, as it seemed, getting farther and farther away from the common round of civilised life. As Gérard described wolf and boar hunts in these very woods, her eyes wandered anxiously down into the green glades beside the road. That corner by the sandy rocks had been a famous haunt of robbers years ago. The heavy coaches of the time were generally upset there, the ruts were so deep, and this gave the 'larrons' their opportunity. It was nearly a hundred years ago; but this spot was still supposed by the peasants to be haunted by a well-known highwayman.

'In the great Revolution,' said Gérard, 'M. de Brye's grandfather was obliged to fly from the mob and hide himself in these woods. He found a little cave in those rocks, and managed to live there for some days; but at last they found him and dragged him back to the *Maison Blanche*. They had a grand idea, to make him

set his house on fire with his own hands. He did it, too.'

'What became of him afterwards?' said Mr. Mowbray.

'They let him go, and he escaped to Germany. I think I would rather have died.'

Then Mr. Mowbray asked something about the Germans in the late war.

'They did not venture into these forests,' said Gérard, looking gloomily down.

Pauline wished her father had not alluded to the war.

At last the road became less wild and solitary; there was a break in the woods; vineyards and cornfields began to appear again on the sunny slopes. But it was still a forest country. Then the horses stopped at a high point of the road, where a stone crucifix stood on three mossy steps, its foot heaped with votive wreaths of beads, and faded leaves and flowers. Gérard stood up in the carriage, and offered his hand to Pauline.

'If these ladies will stand up for a moment,' he said, smiling, 'they will see Maulévrier.'

'What, already!' said Mr. Mowbray.

Pauline stood up, her heart beating strangely, and looked past the crucifix, across the waves of varied green to where those ridges of steep gray roof were shining in the sun. She thought, even at this distance, that Gérard's home was worthy of him, but she was troubled by her own agitation, and said nothing. It did not seem necessary, for her father and mother were eager in their admiration. Gérard looked at her a little curiously; it perhaps struck him that the charming English girl had lost some of her frank enthusiasm. She felt that he was looking, but did not turn her eyes that way. He was disappointed,

but Pauline would not see it. She stood gazing across the wooded valley, finding out by degrees the church-spire, the roofs of houses just showing down below, the poplars in the village street.

'Your house is quite regal,' said Mr. Mowbray, turning to Gérard. 'Of course you are Legitimist: a man could not live in a place like that and be anything else. It is ancien régime all over. You have oubliettes, no doubt. Do you put your peasants into them?'

'The peasants are not mine, do you see, monsieur,' said Gérard. 'Madame, why does Monsieur Mowbray refuse to believe that we Legitimists are civilised, and love the people?'

'I cannot tell. Because he is very stupid and very prejudiced,' said Mrs. Mowbray, smiling, as she sat down. 'But really I feel as if I was going to stay in a feudal castle. I had no idea your situation was so stately and beautiful, and such a very long way from everywhere.'

'Isn't it refreshing?' said her husband. 'No railway, no telegraph—no post, I was almost going to say.'

'O, you are quite mistaken; we are within three leagues of a railway. Go on,' said M. de Maulévrier to the coachman; and they started off at full swing down the hill.

Madame de Maulévrier and her second son had never suited each other very well. Victor was a man of the world, the modern world which his mother hated. As a boy, he had rebelled against the strict life of the château, and had tried unsuccessfully to make Gérard rebel too. To do him justice, however, he had never shown any jealousy of Gérard, and since he had grown up and entered the army his mother had had no fault

to find with him. In his visits to Maulévrier he conformed quietly to all her rules, and she did not trouble herself as to what he thought of them. She had the outward respect and obedience which every French son pays to his mother, and this was enough from Victor, though it would have been sadly too little from Gérard. She and Victor were, in reality, strangers to each other, and never likely to become anything else.

Victor had looked forward with some dismay to the two days of clockwork existence that would have to be passed at Maulévrier before Gérard and his friends arrived. Life alone with his mother was a serious thing. He could only smoke by stealth. 'Triboulet' and his kind were interdicted; the lightest reading was the *Figaro*. Cards must not be even mentioned, nor dancing, nor acting; politics must only be talked within certain limits. Every kind of modern art, in books, painting, music, was hateful to the Marquise. The breath of scandal was never heard in her house; nothing light or weak of any kind was to be found there. Victor often wondered how his brother Gérard could have grown up so freely in this narrow place, with wide sympathies and a refined education. He did not do justice to the clearness and purity of such an air as this, sweet and bracing in its sharp thinness to those souls who can breathe in it at all. Like the dwellers on mountain-tops, they are melancholy; but like them, too, they can look up straight into the blue sky, without any clouds of smoke between.

After all, Victor's two days alone with his mother passed off fairly well. He thought she was more indulgent than she used to be; at any rate, he did not feel

himself so much criticised and disapproved of. But afterwards he thought that this was mere indifference, her mind being occupied with other things. Gérard had been quite right in proposing to bring the Mowbrays to Maulévrier. She liked to think of his having made friends with a man who had known and respected his father, and she had many things in her mind to say to Mr. Mowbray—recollections of her husband, which she thought he would care to hear; questions to ask about him. She also wished in her heart to reward Gérard for his dutiful behaviour about Mademoiselle de Brye.

Victor found no difficulty this time in making conversation for his mother. Gérard's doings at Tourlyon, the family of Brye, their ways and their plans, were subjects of endless interest. Victor did his duty thoroughly; he spoke with esteem of Monsieur and Madame de Brye, with admiration of Françoise. Madame de Maulévrier listened a little doubtfully, though she was pleased. Victor had spoken strongly, for him, and had apparently given her some reason for thought. As they sat in the salon after breakfast, on the day that Gérard and his friends were expected, she at her usual needlework, he turning over the *Union* and thinking of a cigar, she said suddenly and rather sternly, 'Mademoiselle de Brye has a character, then!'

'Certainly, ma mère, and a very decided one,' said Victor, looking at her gravely.

'I suppose it is best so!'

'Can there be any doubt about it?'

'Yes, a great deal,' said Madame de Maulévrier. 'It may often be a mistake for a young girl to have a character. All that ought to arrange itself after she is married.'

Mademoiselle de Brye's character, for instance, might not suit Gérard's. He has one, you know.'

'Without doubt. But Mademoiselle Fanni is so well brought up that I think you need not fear.'

'What did you call her?' said the Marquise sharply.

'Fanni, the old name I knew when we were children.'

'I do not like those baby names,' said the Marquise: 'you are not children any more, and they are better forgotten.'

'It is true,' said Victor.

His tone was a little sad, but Madame de Maulévrier did not notice it; she was not thinking of him. Neither of them spoke for two or three minutes. It was one of those silences that Victor often declared to exist nowhere but at Maulévrier. The old clock ticked slowly, but though it was in the middle of the day, all the house was profoundly still, and not a sound came in at the open windows.

'Have you read Bismarck's last speech, ma mère?' said Victor at last, returning to his newspaper.

'Merci! I prefer to ignore his existence,' replied Madame de Maulévrier.

Victor smiled a little grimly, and wondered how soon he would be able to escape.

'What sort of person is the daughter of this Englishman?' asked his mother.

'Well, Gérard thinks her beautiful, and she certainly is a fine young woman. She is tall, like her mother, fair, blue eyes, an English beauty. A style that I do not admire so much as Gérard does.'

His mother raised her eyes from her tapestry, and fixed them upon him.

'Can I trust you, Victor?' she said.

He gazed at her in astonishment. Her face was as hard as ever; there was no affection in it

for him; her rare smiles and softenings were kept for Gérard, as her confidences had always been.

'Trust me? certainly; you know it,' he answered quietly.

'It is about Gérard,' she went on, in a lowered voice. 'Since he went to Tourlyon I have discovered something; it was in the blotting-book on the table in his room. I only ask you because I cannot ask him. It seemed to explain things that he had said to me; and if you could reassure me—'

Victor's whole attention was bent upon her; in his dark steady eyes there was a reflection of her own natural sternness, and for some reason she felt herself hesitating and changing colour.

'In plain words,' she said, 'Gérard is in love with somebody. Who is it? Tell me. You are his brother, and likely to know; young men tell their secrets to each other. You can trust me as I trust you.'

'Yes, I am your son,' said Victor.

It sounded a little theatrical. If he meant to touch her heart for himself, he quite failed, for she was only thinking of Gérard.

'How did you discover it?' he said. 'What did Gérard say to you? I do not quite understand.'

'It was a paper of verses; a farewell to somebody,' said Madame de Maulévrier. 'What did he say? Why, he pretended he did not wish to marry. But it cannot have been any one possible, or he would have told me her name.'

'An imaginary woman, probably,' said Victor. 'Poetical fellows like Gérard are always doing that sort of thing.'

'Why cannot you be frank with me—tell me the truth!' exclaimed Madame de Maulévrier. 'Imaginary—absurd! He hoped to meet her in paradise. You

think he would not wish me to know. He has made you swear not to tell me, perhaps? Your mother is an unhappy creature among you all.'

'My mother, do not vex yourself in this way,' said Victor gently. 'I never heard of this lady, and even now I can hardly believe in her existence. Anyhow, Gérard is quite resigned. You would have been satisfied if you had seen him at Tourlyon. These poets always have ideals out of reach. They have two lives, do you see? It is the way with them all.'

'It is a very stupid way,' said Madame de Maulévrier. 'But you don't convince me in the least. When Gérard left home a fortnight ago he was in love with somebody. He can hardly have forgotten her yet.'

'He has, if she existed a thousand times over,' said Victor. 'When a man leads a hermit life, like our excellent Gérard, and then goes out into the world, he is certain to lose his heart over and over again. It has been a struggle all this time between his duty to Mademoiselle de Brye—she attracts him too, I can tell you—and his admiration of Mademoiselle Mowbray.'

Victor thought it was only prudent to say this, to prepare his mother for what he himself thought probable—Gérard's complete enslaving by the blue-eyed English girl. Madame de Maulévrier smiled rather scornfully.

'Gérard is not quite so weak as you suppose,' she said. 'Now, there can be no struggle; he is engaged. And is it only the hermits who lose their hearts, my poor Victor?'

'We in the crowd are more prudent,' said Victor. 'Besides, most of us are poor fellows whose hearts nobody cares for.'

This, too, was lost on his mother.

'Come with me to Gérard's room,' she said, 'and I will show you what I meant. Only never tell him you have seen it. Do you understand?'

Victor got up; but he stood still, and looked at his mother.

'If you will pardon me,' he said, 'I would rather not see it. I am sure Gérard has neither done nor thought anything that need grieve you.'

Madame de Maulévrier stared, flushing faintly. Victor saw that she was thinking of him at last; but she said nothing. Perhaps she was angry; but he thought not.

'You know Gérard, ma mère, and so do I,' he went on. 'We have the same opinion of him. Now, if you will allow me, I am going out for a little walk.'

She stood passively, and let him kiss her hand.

'Very well, mon fils,' she said, after a moment. 'You will be here to receive them.'

'Certainly,' said Victor; and he strolled away somewhat thoughtfully into the park with his cigar.

CHAPTER XII.

A LEGITIMIST HOUSE.

THE shadows were lengthening as Gérard and his friends drove through the village street. The vivid depth and clearness of the light gave a strange intense reality to everything—a look that in misty England one reads of and imagines, but never sees. People lifted up their worn intelligent faces as the carriage passed, some looking grave and weary, others smiling. The broadest smiles were on the face of a fat old woman who was stocking her

kitchen with brown loaves a yard long, which a moustached baker in a blouse was unloading from his cart at her door. A little farther on, the Curé was standing at his gate. Gérard's face brightened as he saw his old friend, every line of whose face was full of welcome.

'It is my dear old tutor,' he explained to his companions; and then a minute later they turned out of the street into the avenue of limes.

'Here you are at my home, mademoiselle,' said Gérard, bending forward to Pauline, with a look and smile that reminded her of their talk in the street that day.

She was obliged to respond; she smiled too, a little glad that her father's exclamations on the splendid old trees saved her the trouble of speaking.

A few minutes more, and they were at the château that she had been thinking and dreaming about all these days. It was, indeed, a wild old place to English eyes, deserted, neglected, overgrown with moss and weeds. Poor Mrs. Mowbray, who was not romantic, and liked civilisation, looked round with a slight shiver as she got out of the carriage.

The great rusty gates were open, and Madame de Maulévrier was standing with her son Victor on the steps. Gérard sprang out, kissed his mother, and presented his friends, to whom she made low curtsies. The stateliness of her manner struck them at once; it was quite distinct from Madame de Brye's stiffness. The little Marquise, with her pale straight face, was dressed in a plain gown of some thin stuff, and a round black straw hat. There was something very impressive about her; she gave one the idea of perfect

sincerity. The few words she said were cordial, and she evidently meant them. Pauline felt at once that she admired Madame de Maulévrier very much, far more than any French lady she had seen. Mr. Mowbray was at home with her at once. His wife could not quite make up her mind. As they went into the hall, Gérard turned to Pauline again with his half-wistful look.

'You are very welcome to Maulévrier,' he said. 'If the world was a different place, one might be happy.'

'One *is* happy,' Pauline answered; and then she saw that Madame de Maulévrier's eyes were fixed upon her.

'You like France, mademoiselle?' she said, in a voice which was musical enough, though it had a harsh note in it sometimes.

'Yes, madame,' Pauline answered quietly.

Then another inhabitant of Maulévrier—a great rough sad-faced deerhound—after caressing his master, came and poked his long nose under her hand. She lingered a moment in the hall, talking to him, while he gazed up into her face, and Gérard stood looking on.

The great hall was paved with stone; a stone staircase, broad and easy, with heavy iron balusters, went up on one side; opposite was a high open door leading into another hall. That was the garden side of the house. The long windows there were open on the garden terrace, and looked out upon trees bathed in sunlight. The light shone through the house from end to end, giving it a noble cheerfulness. The old uneven painted walls were hung with pictures, chiefly portraits of old Maulévriers. There were a few old chairs and tables in these

halls, a great inlaid cabinet, a stand of arms, and an immense stuffed wolf grinning horribly in a corner. Not much look of comfort; but still Pauline, as she stood there with her hand on the dog's head, knew that she loved Maulévrier, and could have lived and died there, if Fate had chosen to arrange it so. She also understood that little French girl's shrinking from a place like this. It had such a strong character of its own that the people who lived there must absolutely adapt themselves to it. It must be loved or hated with all one's heart, like a stern human being. One might be in entire harmony with it, or in hopeless discord; and the last need not be altogether one's own fault.

They went into the inner hall, and through an anteroom into the large salon, which looked out on the garden side of the house. These rooms seemed bare and cold. The walls and ceiling were carved and painted gray, with running wreaths of flowers in pale colours. The great chimneypiece was carved and blazoned with coats-of-arms. The chairs were chiefly white and gold, their cushions of faded brocade; but there was a mixture of large tapestried fauteuils, and one or two still more cumbersome, covered with old yellow satin. The floor looked like a sheet of ice. As to books, they were only represented by a few pamphlets and newspapers lying on a small table. On the narrow shelf of the chimneypiece there were three photographs in velvet frames—Henri Cinq, Don Carlos, and Princess Marguerite. The whole thing was a contrast to Madame de Brye's drawing-room, so full of comfort and pretty things; but it gave one the idea of a family holding fast, in poverty and misfortune, to its old tradi-

tions, refusing to believe that the world had changed and left all those things behind.

It was hopelessly sad, and yet there was a strange beauty about it. Pauline began to understand why the Marquis de Maulévrier should have grown up melancholy.

The whole house had the same effect of last-century greatness, swept out by revolutions. The long unfurnished corridors, paved with red tiles; the bedrooms, with their old furniture of various styles, and hangings of patched tapestry; and then, through the windows, that glorious wooded view in the glow of evening—Mr. Mowbray told his wife he had never been in such an inspiring place. He was almost wild with delight. Mrs. Mowbray thought it all very strange and interesting, and confessed that she liked Madame de Maulévrier.

'But always remember you are in France, darling,' she said to Pauline, who had come into her room before going down to dinner, and was standing rather dreamily at the window.

'Am I likely to forget it, mother?' she said, turning round. 'We could not well be farther from England. Didn't it give you a sort of thrill to hear Madame de Maulévrier talk so naturally of "our king"? One seemed to have gone back suddenly a hundred years.'

'Yes, poor things!' said Mrs. Mowbray. 'I think it is almost a pity to waste so much good feeling. There, don't argue with me. You are a furious Royalist now, of course. But when I said you must remember you are in France, I was not thinking of politics. About them I rather agree with M. de Brye's dog. I am afraid it will be dull for you, with no one to speak to but

Madame de Maulévrier and me. French girls do lead very stupid lives, no doubt. You must never go out without me, you know, Pauline.'

'Not with papa!' said Pauline.

'Well, not on any of these wild expeditions that M. de Maulévrier was talking about. I think you ought to stay with me as much as possible, dearest child.'

'M. de Maulévrier won't ask me to go, if he thinks I ought not.'

'We will always consult his mother, at any rate,' said Mrs. Mowbray.

Pauline was a little vexed; she thought her father was always chaperon enough, no matter how many young Frenchmen might be of the party. The Comte had never shown her anything but the barest politeness, and as to the Marquis, he was himself—her friend, as she called him silently. Nothing could alter the truth that they understood each other, he and she.

'And why not?' Pauline asked herself, in a fierce young impatience of she hardly knew what, of the world's opinion and suspicions. 'Have two people like us never been friends before?'

Mr. Mowbray had already gone down-stairs; his wife was not quite ready, but Gérard had warned them of his mother's passion for punctuality, so Mrs. Mowbray told Pauline to go on, and she would follow her directly. Pauline walked down the red arched corridor slowly, in her white gown. She felt sad and uneasy, with all her fine theories of friendship. Half-way down she turned into the deep recess of a large window, to look at one or two portraits which were hanging there, especially one, small and faded, of a young man with dark eyes, in an old-fashioned uniform. It was

easy to see that Gérard was not a new type in his family. A quick step on the tiles startled her; she turned round, and saw him coming along the passage. He stood still and looked at her, smiling.

'It makes me very happy to see you standing there, mademoiselle!'

'I am afraid I am curious,' said Pauline, 'but I am so fond of pictures—and I could not help stopping to look at these. I suppose that is a relation of yours?'

'Yea, and a namesake. That poor fellow lived here in the time of the Revolution. Our misfortunes began with him, and have gone on ever since. It is a pity we don't banish the name.'

'But you are not so unfortunate as some people. You have your old place still—and how very beautiful it is!' said Pauline.

'Poor old place!' said Gérard. 'It is beautiful at this moment, certainly. I have so much to show you, and that dear Monsieur Mowbray. How happy you are, mademoiselle, to have such a charming father!'

'Yes, papa is everything that is dear and good,' said Pauline.

'And Madame Mowbray too! I look on with envy, and feel myself outside in the cold. I have no friends like that, except my old tutor. I must introduce him to you. And, mademoiselle, may I ask you to forgive me one thing?'

'I do not know what it can be, monsieur,' said Pauline.

This was an odd way of talking, but how could he be expected to talk like a commonplace man? thought this friend of the Marquis.

'Forgive me if I speak to you as an Englishman would.'

'O, certainly.'

'You don't misunderstand me? You know how it is with us? Our young girls are kept under lock

and key by their good mothers, and one cannot have any talk with them but the smallest, do you see? But I knew at once, when I saw you, how you had been brought up: you are to me like Dante's Beatrice—I could not talk in that small way to you. I cannot look at you without wishing to tell you all my thoughts—not that they are worth your knowing.'

Pauline listened, and thanked the kind angel who had advised Mademoiselle de Brye to confide in her. What silly things she might have fancied from such a speech as this! As it was, thank heaven, she perfectly understood Gérard. He was a poet, and unhappy; she might do him some good, and most certainly he was welcome to all her sympathy. But she could not let him overrate her so much.

'I do assure you,' she said, 'that I am not the least like Beatrice or any one so great. I am not at all clever, and know very little of the world. When you talk to me, you will find me much stupider than you think. Papa knows it. I am not the least original, unfortunately.'

'Gérard! Not dressed yet!' cried a voice from the other end of the corridor.

'In a moment, mother,' Gérard answered, with life and cheerfulness in his voice.

He did not speak again to Pauline, but left her with an eager look of gratitude, and something more than admiration. She felt strangely lifted up, as if she was going through some high and new experience. Gérard's enthusiasm found only too ready a response. Something, half pleasure, half pain so deep that she hardly dared to realise it, was burning in her cheeks and shining in her deep blue eyes as she

walked down the corridor. There, at the top of the stairs, she met Madame de Maulévrier, who had watched the English girl coming towards her, tall and graceful in her white dress, and had repeated to herself that this young woman was both beautiful and good. The Marquise had a very clear judgment of people, and an undoubted confidence in it. She waited for Pauline at the top of the stairs, asked whether her mother was tired after the long drive, and then took her hand to lead her down-stairs. When they reached the salon, Pauline almost thought that Gérard's stern little mother had something of his nameless charm.

To the three English guests, this old-fashioned household, with its simple ways, was an immense relief from the *Maison Brye*. People there thought themselves so much more agreeable, and were so much more tiresome. Here the dinner was almost brilliant. Madame de Maulévrier evidently liked the strangers. She and Mr. Mowbray had a great deal to say to each other, while Pauline and her mother found themselves laughing and talking with the two young men. Gérard that

evening, in the character of host, looked wonderfully handsome, and was quite a sociable being. Victor also did his best. Pauline thought the dining-room beautiful; its walls and ceiling were dark red, with remains of painting, and, in the revived old fashion, china plates were hung round in groups. Gérard had done that himself one day, he told them.

Late that night, when the dream-like evening was over, Pauline opened her shutters and leaned out into the sea of moonlight. The wild hoot of an owl startled her, then another, and another, as they flew restlessly from tree to tree. The frogs down in the park joined in with their harsh chorus. It seemed a strange weird thing to hear such sounds at night, but at Maulévrier everything was strange. Pauline hid her hot cheeks in her hands as she leaned over her iron bar. Would she ever bitterly repent having come here at all? Would it not have been better to have no interests but at home in England, to walk quietly in the paths that good friends had marked out for her?

'No, no, this is better!' the foolish girl said to herself.

(*To be continued.*)

DR. AND MRS. MORTON.

DR. and Mrs. Morton had finished tiffin, and were discussing some private theatricals, which, followed by a ball, were to take place that evening at the mess-house of the —th. The subject was a delicate one, for on it they held decided, but unfortunately divided, opinions. The doctor had a prejudice against such things, and, though in most respects very indulgent to his pretty little wife, objected to her attending them. She, however, was bent on doing so.

' You know, dear, that it is the very last of the season, and every one will be there.'

' And you know my rooted objection to these entertainments, Ada ; why do you urge me ?'

' Then when shall I ever have an opportunity of showing off that lovely pink and silver cloak you got from Madras on my birthday ?' pouted the young wife.

' Ah, that is a deeply important matter !' laughed the doctor. ' We must see if we can't get up a dance in our own bungalow, little woman,' continued he somewhat inconsequently.

' But that won't be a ball and theatricals to-night ; and by that time Daddahbhoy, Rumanagee, and the other Parsees will have their shops filled with the new-fashioned cloak, while as yet mine is the only one in the cantonment. I really do think, William, that you might let me go. I am sure I sit patiently enough through those solemn dinners and scientific *réunions* of which you are so fond.'

' Well, well, as it is the very last of the season, I suppose I must be amiable for once ; but—'

' O, that's a dear good disagreeable old thing !' said his wife, giving him a kiss ; and, without waiting to hear more, in a flutter of delight she left the room.

When left to himself the doctor pondered their late conversation, and felt by no means satisfied with his share in it. Still, having consented, he determined to do so with a good grace ; and, on Mrs. Morton presently re-entering to look for something, he said, ' By the way, dear, when shall I order the palanquin for you ?'

Still continuing her search, she replied rather absently, ' O, any time. I shall only want it returning ; the Hills will call for me going.'

Dr. Morton was taken aback.

' So,' he exclaimed, ' you had arranged to go with—or without—my consent ?'

With a little start, she answered somewhat confusedly, ' Well, I thought you would be sure to give me leave, William, and—'

' As you have chosen to act so wholly independently,' interrupted her husband angrily, ' I withdraw the consent I unwittingly gave. The house shall be closed at the usual hour, and if you do not happen to be at home at eleven o'clock, *we do not sleep under the same roof this night.*' And in high displeasure Dr. Morton left the house ; nor did he return for a couple of hours, during which his mood had more than once changed. The first irritation over,

he felt that it was hard upon his pet to deny her the pleasure to which but the moment before he had assented. How could he bear to spend the long evening opposite that disappointed wistful little face ? It began, too, to dawn upon him that 'the whole cantonment'—which, in India, where private life is more distinctly public property than in any other corner of the world, stands for our esteemed old friend Mrs. Grundy—might, as has ever been its wont, put an unkind construction on motives it did not understand ; might hint that he was not so much standing by his principles—which, in fact, he had yielded—as avenging his own offended dignity. The result of all which cogitation was that if, on his return home, he should find that she had accepted both disappointment and rebuke in a proper spirit—much, indeed all, depended on that—she should go with their friends to the ball ; or even, in the very probable event of their having already called, he would show his magnanimity by taking her himself. Just then a carriage drove swiftly past his ; he recognised it to be the Hills' , and in it—could he credit his senses ?—all radiant with smiles, wrapped in her new cloak, sat his wife, who, in merry defiance, kissed her hands to him as they passed.

Both ball and theatricals were delightful, and none enjoyed them more than the volatile and fascinating Mrs. Morton. In the gaiety of her spirits she confided to one after another of her dearest friends her husband's threat ; and to one or two who expressed some fear that he might carry it out she laughingly replied that she did not think that that would be at all likely ; but in the event of anything so improbable, she had still

her palanquin, in which she could rest till gun-fire, when, of course, the house would be opened.

I am told that nowadays palanquins are in as little request in India as sedan-chairs in England ; but in Dr. and Mrs. Morton's time—for know, O reader, that my story is founded on fact—they were, except in the evening drive, the most general mode of carriage. In the verandah of every house one or more might always be seen, with their bearers at hand, ready for instant service by day or by night.

It was past two o'clock when Dr. Morton heard, coming down the compound, the moaning monotonous cry of the bearers who carried their mistress to her home. Placing the palanquin in the verandah, they called loudly for admission, striking the door with their hands, in no small wonder that it had not, as usual, been thrown wide at their approach. Expectation of the coming triumph had driven sleep from his pillow ; and he now turned his head with a grim smile, for his revenge was at hand—the little rebel should learn a lesson never to be forgotten.

To the bearers' voices was soon added that of their mistress's ; indignantly, entreatingly, coaxingly she called in turn. She reminded her husband that their verandah was overlooked from the road. ' Let me in, I beg, I entreat of you, William. It will be gun-fire in a couple of hours, and if seen here I shall be the laughing-stock of the whole station. O William dear, do let me in !'

To which her husband answered sternly, ' We shall not rest under the same roof this night ;' and he chuckled to himself, for he only intended to keep her waiting a few minutes.

For a moment Mrs. Morton seemed irresolute; then, having said a few words to the head-bearer, she cried aloud in a passionate burst of sobs, 'I will die sooner than submit to such humiliation,' and, followed by her servants, she rushed away.

There was a long wailing cry—a shriek—a heavy splash. Good Heavens! could it be—could it be possible that his impetuous wife had thrown herself into the well? Hark to those wild cries, as the bearers run hither and thither with loud exclamations and calls for help. Paralysed with fear, the husband could with difficulty open the door; then, rushing out, he would have flung himself into the still rippling water, in a mad attempt at rescue, had not a bearer hung upon his arm, as, in broken English, he tried to explain that his mistress was safe.

'Then where is she? What is all this row about? Who has fallen in? What are you all yelling for?'

'For Mem Sahib tell, "Throw big stone down well;" then too much bobbery make; run this way, that way—plenty great tamashā. Mem Sahib make big cry, then Mem run away.'

Dr. Morton knew himself outwitted, for doubtless his wife had taken advantage of the door she had thus succeeded in opening. Ah, well, though vexed at the trick, he was by no means sorry that the conflict was at an end, and that they should both pass what remained of the night in peaceful rest. He dismissed the bearers, and returned to the house, but to find it shut! The door was closed, and obstinately resisted all efforts to open it; while a voice from the window at which he had himself so lately spoken said, 'We shall not sleep

under the same roof this night.' The doctor, with an uneasy laugh, first treated the situation as a silly joke, then expostulated, then stormed; but all without avail or even notice. He called to the ayah to open the door; but her answer was that she was locked in Mem's room, and Mem had the key under her pillow. He stamped at first with anger, but soon with cold, for his night pyjamas offered slight protection against the chill morning air. At length, seeing the palanquin, he got into it. The lovely cloak was lying on the cushions; he drew the hood over his head, its delicate hues in striking contrast to his sunburnt face and dishevelled hair, and, dragging it round his broad shoulders with an angry tug, settled himself to sleep.

The gun had fired, the 'assembly' sounded, but still the doctor slept on. Nor was he roused by the sound of horses' hoofs, as a bevy of ladies, unescorted except by servants, rode up to the door. They would be joined in their ride by their husbands after parade; and then, after a final round of the course, assemble at the house of one or other of their party to chota-hazarie and a lively discussion of absent friends.

In much surprise they waited a minute or so before the closed and silent house; then, with significant glances, one after the other slid from her saddle, determined to solve the mystery. Ah, there it is! A little corner of the cloak worn the night before by Mrs. Morton peeped out of the closed doors of the palanquin; 'twas evident that the poor little thing had been obliged to seek that shelter. 'What a shame!' They would speak to her, they would comfort her, and O, what a laugh they would have against her! They

grouped themselves round the palanquin, bending low to peer in ; and one on either side drew back the sliding doors as—gracious !—Dr. Morton, still half-asleep, slowly opened his eyes. Most effectually was he wakened by the startled exclamation with which the visitors hastily retreated to their horses, which they were just in the act of mounting as the door was thrown open, and Mrs. Morton appeared in her riding-habit. They immediately rode away, to the infinite satisfaction of the recumbent but impatient doctor, who was in mortal fear that fresh complications might arise through his unexplained absence from duty bringing messages of inquiry.

At the meeting of husband and wife we would rather not play fly in the corner, but take for granted that there was the usual amount of tears, recrimination,

and hysterics, in which—for this occasion only—a torn and crumpled fabric of pink and silver took an active part ; the sight of it from time to time stimulating Mrs. Morton's grief and eloquence, while her husband, who, smarting under the *exposé* of the morning, had entered on the fray with unusual spirit, soon found himself vanquished, limp, and utterly dismayed, as his own inconsistent, tyrannical, and selfish conduct was contrasted—not for the first time—with the patient endurance of his long-suffering wife.

Neither of this, nor of the reconciliation that followed in natural sequence, shall we make record ; but we must of the pleasing fact that, at the very next concert, Mrs. Morton, leaning on her husband's arm, appeared in most excellent spirits, her cloak, this time of amber and gold, being admired by all beholders.

G. NICOLSON.

ACTOR-MANAGERS.

MR. WALTER DONALDSON, who died in 1877, aged eighty-four, used to say that, in the course of his sixty odd years of histrionic experience, he generally found the most successful actor was most unsuccessful as a manager. He regarded this as an unaccountable but indisputable fact, and has so noted it down in his 'Recollections of an Actor.' He held up as his type of a successful manager 'Richard Brinsley Sheridan, not an actor-manager, but one capable of presiding over the drama free from the petty jealousies of a Garrick.' To Sheridan, the author-manager, as he points out, we owed the actor's advance in social position; the introduction of Mrs. Siddons to the stage in her true character, that of a great actress; the discovery of Mrs. Jordan; the establishment in his rightful place of John Kemble, and, after him, of Edmund Kean. On the other hand, he notes the persistent efforts of Garrick to suppress or thrust back into obscurity 'Mossop, Macklin, Mrs. Siddons, and the father of Richard Brinsley Sheridan.' To this list the name of Henderson and other actors might be added.

He also pointed out that the salaries paid by Garrick were kept at their lowest ebb: Reddish, a really great actor, second only to Garrick, received but five pounds a week, and many clever players in Drury Lane under his management were obliged to exist upon the beggarly salary of a pound a week! Sheridan, his successor, paid from four pounds by propor-

tionate advances upward to forty pounds per week.

He again notes, as supporting his view of actor-managers, the fact that directly the two Harrises retired from the management of Covent Garden, and actors took their places, the quality of its plays and players degenerated, and at length the British drama was ejected as a source of failure, and foreign opera usurped its place. Also he traces the great success of the Dublin Theatre at the beginning of the present century to the management of F. E. Jones, 'a gentleman by birth and education,' who, 'fortunately for the true interests of the drama, did not act himself,' and therefore, adds he, 'merit had its free scope, without that thwarting which is generally the case when the manager is himself an actor.'

On the opposite side stand the stories extant of Sheridan's jealousy of contemporary dramatists, particularly Cumberland, and the tolerably well-substantiated story which states that every piece he—Cumberland—presented at Drury Lane, while it was under the management of Sheridan, met with strongly-marked rejection. It is well known that in Sir Fretful Plagiary, Sheridan depicted Cumberland; and Cumberland's bitter remarks on the treatment of dramatic authors by theatrical managers, in the second volume of his autobiography, may have got some colour from the fact.

George Colman, the dramatic author, when manager of Covent

Garden Theatre, strove hard to suppress Goldsmith as a dramatist ; and the last-named author's first comedy owed its representation purely to the efforts of Burke, Johnson, and Sir Joshua Reynolds, and not to the comedy-writing manager's favour. When Goldsmith's second comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer*, came, the same author - manager protested vigorously against its being thrust upon him, and we are told by Cumberland that he would have done so successfully had not Dr. Johnson 'stood forth in all his terrors as champion for the piece.' When it was produced, to guard it from any foul play, the Burkes, with Johnson, Sir Joshua, Caleb Whiteford, Adam Drummond, Cumberland, 'and a phalanx of North British predetermined applauders, under the banner of Major Mills,' with preconcerted signals carefully arranged, assembled in the theatre, after a very merry dinner given to the author at the neighbouring Shakespeare Tavern.

Yet Goldsmith himself attributed the drama's want of progress to the avarice and vanity of actor - managers. He wrote : 'I am not insensible that third nights (the author's nights) are disagreeable drawbacks upon the annual profits of the stage. I am confident it is much more to the manager's advantage to furbish up all the lumber which the good sense of our ancestors, but for his care, had consigned to oblivion. . . . For the future it is somewhat unlikely that he whose labours are valuable, or who knows their value, will turn to the stage for either fame or subsistence, when he must at once flatter an actor and please an audience.'

Cumberland, speaking of the powers actors exercise with regard to the dramatists, wrote : 'It is to be lamented that their influence

is such as to induce an author to make greater sacrifices, and pay more attention to the particular persons he has in view to represent the characters of the play, than to the general interest of the play itself; and addsthat the actor's 'unaccommodating caprice reduces the author either to sacrifice the harmony of his composition out of flattery to their freaks, or, by submitting to the rebuff, put his play upon its trial with the discouraging circumstance attached to it of having begged its way through the repugnant heroes and heroines of the green-room.'

Leigh Hunt, in his autobiography, states that he had heard actors confess 'that Shakespeare would be damned to-morrow were he to write again,' which goes to show how small the chance of another Shakespeare may have been with these actors for managers. On the other side, writers who were anything but Shakespeares, whose plays have been written for the actors rather than 'the general interests of the play,' or those of the drama, have always been most popular with actor-managers, or with managers who were themselves under the control of 'star' actors. It is amusing, when remembering that most of our standard plays were rejected by actors, to read, in Fitzball's ingenuous autobiography, that pleasing the actors 'is the greatest proof an author for the stage can judge by'; that Barry Sullivan pronounced his Egyptian tragedy of *Nitocris* 'little inferior to the best works of the kind on the stage,' and that Miss Glyn, and even Mrs. Selby, echoed that opinion, although 'she had a very indifferent part for talent like hers.' Nor is it less amusing to note the alacrity with which he gives as 'kind and encouraging' the following characteristic epistle from

Mrs. Fitzwilliam after his comedy, *Haughty Word*, renamed *The Widow's Wedding*, had been read at the Haymarket Theatre. This was enclosed in a letter from Buckstone :

' My dear Mr. Fitzball,—I participated in the reading last evening. Mr. Buckstone sees a great deal of good in it, with a few easy alterations. I will play Fanny; but instead of young, timid, and beautiful, you must make her jolly and good-natured, as in *The Rough Diamond* —Yours ever, FANNY FITZWILLIAM.'

Imagine another Shakespeare not only compelled, but (if you can) delighted, to convert the melancholy Jaques into the light-hearted Mercutio at the bidding of a modern player, even if he chanced to be a manager, or she chanced to be a Mrs. Fitzwilliam.

' You see,' wrote Fitzball, ' by the kind encouraging note slipped into Buckstone's envelope, how amiable and considerate she was for others !' And so he gratefully made the 'young, timid, and beautiful,' as per order, 'jolly and good-natured,' and, I believe, nobody ever suspected this singular alteration, or discovered any want of keeping between that part and the whole. But, alas, Mrs. Fitzwilliam died suddenly before *The Haughty Word* could be produced (Sept. 11th, 1854).

John Kemble as actor-manager is said to have so embittered the life of ' Handsome Conway,' by obscuring his dawning talent to exalt his own, that it affected his mind, and was the real cause of his committing suicide in 1828. Donaldson thought ' Conway the only actor fit to succeed John Kemble at Covent Garden in 1817 ;' and adds, if he ' had remained in provincial shades until

Kemble retired he would have stood alone as Brutus, Coriolanus, Alexander, Romeo, and Jaffier.'

When John Home, in 1755, submitted his tragedy of *Douglas* —the only one of his many plays that survive—to Garrick, to whom he had previously and vainly offered another tragedy, and to whom he carried the most flattering letters of introduction, it was promptly rejected and sent back, with a note pronouncing it 'totally unfit for the stage.' But after it had, through the influence of powerful friends, been produced, with immense success, at the Edinburgh Theatre, and the elder Sheridan had marked his admiration of it by sending its author a gold medal, and great friends of high rank—Lord Bute amongst others—had exercised influence to get it brought out at Covent Garden, where also it was greatly successful, then the actor-manager Garrick became Mr. Home's ' warmest patron,' and, in the interests of the drama, produced the long since extinct and much inferior tragedy of *Agis*, writing to its author, on the morning after its production, as follows:

' My dear friend,—Joy, joy, joy to you ! My anxiety yesterday gave me a small touch of my old complaint ; but our success has stopped the one and cured the other. I am very happy, because I think you are so,' &c.

There are anecdotes extant of even the finest actors the stage has known more than enough to show how unsafe the higher interests of the drama are in their hands. James Quin, although an educated man and professor of elocution to the Royal Family, knew so little of histrionic literature that he was astonished to find the Macbeth he had always played

was not Shakespeare's. 'What,' he asked, 'does little Davy mean by all this nonsense about a new version? Don't I act Shakespeare's *Macbeth*?' Mrs. Pritchard, whom Dr. Johnson called 'an inspired idiot,' was doubtless wonderfully great as a tragic actress; but her interest in the drama is shown when we learn that the only portion of *Macbeth* she had ever read was the part she is said to have played so grandly, Lady Macbeth. When Tom Dibdin was suggesting to the famous comedian Munden that the part of 'Old Liberal,' in one of his plays, was intended to be played 'in humble imitation' of 'Matthew Bramble,' the player cried, 'And who the devi's Matthew Bramble!'

'You are pleased to joke, sir,' said the deferential dramatist (Tom was generally deferential to great actors). 'You have, of course, read *Humphry Clinker*?'

'Not I, sir,' replied Quin. 'After I left school I never read any books but plays, and no play unless I had a part in it, and even then no more of such play than was immediately connected with the character assigned me.'

Had Dibdin been a dramatist to-day he would have known better. He would not have thought of Matthew Bramble, but Joseph Munden, when writing his play.

Douglas Jerrold, on at least one occasion, confessed that his play was written as 'Hissgoose,' the tailor, made coats—to fit the purchaser only, and that any other actors but those for whom it was designed must spoil his work! It was not made to fit them. So strongly was he impressed with this idea that when the actor-manager Charles Kean produced his play, *A Heart of Gold*, and, in defiance of the original inten-

tion of both Jerrold and Kean, left himself out of 'the cast,' the angry playwright and his actor-manager had a desperate quarrel, in which the lawyers played their costly parts. Can you conceive any dramatist writing a play intended to live, which depended confessedly upon a single actor, who, in anger or from mere caprice, might decline to play the part assigned him?

Charles Kean was a famous actor-manager, who brought out various new pieces, and restored to the stage Colley Cibber's *Richard III.* in the place of Shakespeare's, which Macready had previously revived; and his judgment in selecting playwrights, highly as it has been lauded, did not, it seems, benefit his treasury, for his personal friend and biographer, J. W. Cole, a clever amateur actor, has told us that his new pieces were so seldom productive that they 'enforced their own termination by the most coercive of all arguments—a heavy balance on the wrong side of the ledger.'

When Colman's play, *The Africans*, was sent to John Kemble, as the actor-manager of Covent Garden, Harris asked what it was about? 'O,' replied Kemble, 'it will never do. There are three black men, who sell their mother.'

'Colman must be mad,' said Harris; 'send it back to him at once.'

The play was afterwards successful at the Haymarket, and Harris discovered that Kemble either did not read it before he pronounced judgment, or had very carelessly glanced through it. Liston won no small portion of his fame in it as Matthew Mug. Perhaps Kemble had, for the nonce, adopted the rule Menage had when advising Cardinal de Retz to judge poems submitted to

him for criticism—that of looking over a page or two and saying, ‘Sad stuff! wretched poetaster!’ on the ground that, ninety-nine times in a hundred, he would be sure to be right.

John Kemble did not consider Shakespeare fit for the stage until he had ‘adapted’ him; and as his adaptations exist in print in several editions, it is not difficult to understand the extent to which Shakespeare suffered by Kemble’s clumsy and inartistic process.

Garrick altered *Hamlet*, by omitting many of the scenes, and, as he said, ‘rescuing that noble play from all the rubbish of the fifth act.’ As Boaden tells, ‘He cut out the voyage to England, and the execution of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. He omitted the funeral of Ophelia, and all the wisdom of the prince, and the rude jocularity of the gravediggers,’ &c., remodelling and almost entirely rewriting the last act; all the many additions being produced, as even Boaden says, ‘in a mean and trashy commonplace manner; which, in a word, sullied the page of Shakespeare and disgraced the taste and judgment of Mr. Garrick.’ It was by successive actor-managers that Lord Lansdowne’s disgraceful farce, *The Jew of Venice*, was substituted for Shakespeare’s noble play, *The Merchant of Venice*, which Charles Macklin had the honour of reviving.

Miss Mitford’s *Rienzi*, after its production at Covent Garden, was generally admitted to be the most successful and meritorious tragedy that had been produced for twenty years. Yet it had been four years

in the possession of the management, and would not then have appeared, as Macready said, if a young lady who was coming out on the boards had not been told that the part of Claudia was one for which she was peculiarly fitted. The late Mr. Tom Taylor, in one of his magazine articles on the theatre, complained of the star system as creating ‘one-part’ plays, in which the art of the author is maimed to feed the vanity of the player. Stars and actor-managers are commonly one. It has been said of actor-managers, ‘One piece succeeds, and a troop of pieces written in imitation of the successful one immediately monopolises the stage. They inquire not into the causes which may have made such a piece, in its novelty, attractive; but infer that what has drawn good houses will continue to do so, and indulge their monomania till successive failures more than counterbalance the original profits.’

And now, how stands the argument of actor-managers *v.* author-managers? Here the reader must step in, for my space is exhausted. It is time that I laid aside my pen; but, ere I do so, let me add that there are two sides to every question. It is so here. But of late it is so much the custom to regard actor-managers as the drama’s best friends, and their taste and judgment as final and conclusive in everything histrionic, that the other side has been altogether ignored; and I thought a peep at it might set some critical writers thinking, and some lovers of the drama also. That is all.

A. H. WALL.

THE OLD BOOKSTALL.

Walker's Hibernian Magazine.

THERE are few things more interesting than a magazine of the last century. Far more than in any history do we see our forefathers as they were at home. Strange peeps are revealed of the doings and amusements of a bygone age, and the tale is told without any varnish or disguise on the part of the narrator.

What the *Gentleman's Magazine* was to England, *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* was to Ireland during the latter half of the eighteenth century. It has, perhaps, a more marked individuality of character and a stronger flavour of provincialism than the *Gentleman's*, and for these causes suits the curiosity-monger even better. It was at once a newspaper and a monthly miscellany of useful and entertaining literature. It not only gave parliamentary debates and the latest births, deaths, and marriages, but also tit-bits of London and Dublin gossip, the newest outrages, the most thrilling sentimental tales *à la Werther*, along with scraps of poetry and *tête-à-tête* portraits of the leading fashionable belles and beaux of the day. There was no reserve in stating the fortunes, and even ages, of brides : 'Miss So-and-so with 20,000*l.*' is a common thing to see, and is set down with a charming frankness which we of the present day would hardly care to copy. It was no wonder that the monthly budgets of *Walker's Hibernian* were eagerly looked for in remote districts of

the country. As the mail-coaches ploughed toilsomely along through miles of snow or slush to Drogheda, Kilkenny, or Mallow, the precious parcels of magazines were left at the wayside inns. Here messengers were waiting on ragged mountain ponies, and the magazines were duly distributed amongst the great houses of the neighbourhood. The 'master' seized upon them first ; then the young ladies devoured the tales, wept over the poetry, conned the fashion-plates, and studied the latest instructions for building up edifices in hair. After them the numerous 'hangers-on' of the establishment had their turn, and pounced upon the precious pages in order to find out who had fought the last duel, or won the 10,000*l.* prize in the State lottery. The snowed-up gentry had no other literary pabulum to amuse or interest them ; Walker supplied them with scandal, politics, gossip, and recipes for curing glanders in horses, and rheumatism or dropsy in themselves. What strikes us very forcibly in reading over these pages of faded print is the remarkable coincidences which we find between the events of that day and of our own. The outrages of 1882 have indeed strange parallels in those of 1778 : secret murders, midnight raids on private houses, houghing of cattle—all these abounded then, and seem strangely familiar in our ears. For instance, here are a few stray passages, culled at random from *Walker's Hibernian*

Magazine for 1778. Have we not seen hundreds of similar accounts during the last four years in our own newspapers?

'As a servant of Patrick Lynch of Clogher, Esq., was peaceably returning from the races of Castlebar, he was waylaid by Michael Hanegan, Matthew McDonogh, and Michael Murphy, on the road to Belcarra, who in a most inhuman manner murdered him.' 'Saturday night.—A number of villains armed went on the lands of Castiegordon, in the county of Meath, and houghed 18 head of black cattle, and between 70 and 80 sheep, the property of a gentleman, a Quaker, living on said lands; after which they left a threatening letter that if he did not sell a quarter of beef for eight shillings, and mutton proportionately cheap, they were determined to rob and destroy his house, and every other part of his property.'

From Connaught we hear 'that no less than 53 bullocks and 209 sheep have been cruelly mangled on their way from Ballinasloe fair.' From Kilkenny news comes 'that on Wednesday night a number of Whiteboys assembled at the house of James Purcell of Macully, near Dunmore, tythe-proctor, from whence they carried him about six miles, and cut off his ears.' About the same date there is an account of dangerous mobs at Cork, and of a 'set of inhuman wretches, who rubbed turpentine into the back of a cow and then set fire to it.' This, too, was the time when a man might be hung for stealing a sheep. In the same magazine we find that Michael McMahon, Patrick McMahon, Dennis Neal, and Daniel McCarty were executed at Waterford for robberies, and that John Gorman was sentenced to be hanged at Naas for robbing three houses at

Celbridge. So that strong remedies did not mend matters much.

In strange contrast with this black list comes intelligence of fêtes and expensive gaieties which enlivened Dublin during the viceroyalty of the Earl of Buckingham. At a certain house in the Phoenix Park a series of private theatricals was given, and the hostess appeared in a costume which is described with much gusto as 'a pink satin Venetian night-gown, with a most elegant blossom-coloured petticoat, wrought by herself, and trimmed with gauze flowers and jewels.' In the concluding piece she wore a gold ground silk, ornamented with artificial and silver flowers, and with diamonds to the amount of 100,000*l.*' On the 16th March there was a masquerade at the Fishamble-street Rooms. The company began to assemble about twelve, and at two A.M. the rooms were quite full. The Duke of Leinster appeared as a fruit-woman, who changed her oranges for shamrocks as Patrick's Day advanced, afterwards as a physician. Lord Glerawley was a 'sideboard of plate.' Sir Vesey Colclough a 'sweep-chimney.' Mr. Finley a 'large fashionable lady,' &c. Side by side with this account we hear of a duel which was fought near Sir Harry Cavanagh's wall in the park. 'The pistol of the gentleman who fired first burst in his hand, and one of the splinters of the barrel struck him in the right eye, and, penetrating to the optic nerve of the next, struck it fairly across, by which the young gentleman is become totally blind.'

Startling announcements appear now and then in the marriage columns. It would be hard to find a parallel for such a one as this: 'Mr. John Hogarty of Bally-

maeduff, Co. Dublin, aged twenty, to Mrs. Flood of said place, aged eighty-six.'

Here is another :

'Mr. Michael Heyden of Castle-town, Co. Sligo, aged seventy-eight, to Mrs. Honora Ward, aged sixty-eight; having in number between children and grandchildren thirty.'

The same candour is shown with regard to the amount of money accumulated by certain limbs of the law, the whole sum being gravely set down after the name and age of the deceased.

Among the most curious gems of the magazine is one called 'The Odd Prayer of a Miser.' Whether it is a genuine compilation or a clever invention, it would be impossible to say; but, at any rate, there is a grim humour about it which reminds us more of 'Holy Willie's Prayer' than of anything else in literature. It runs as follows :

'O Lord, Thou knowest that I have nine houses in Dublin, and likewise that I have lately purchased an estate in fee simple in the county of Wicklow; therefore I beseech Thee to preserve the two counties of Dublin and Wicklow from fire and earthquake. And, as I have a mortgage in Monaghan, I beg of Thee likewise to have an eye of compassion on that county; and for all the rest of the counties Thou mayest deal with them as Thou pleasest. O, enable the bankers to answer all their bills, and make all my debtors good men. Give a prosperous voyage and return to the Mermaid sloop, which I have insured. And as Thou hast said that the days of the wicked shall be short, I trust in Thee that Thou wilt not forget Thy promise, having purchased an estate in reversion of Sir J. C.—, a profligate young man. I also pray Thee to keep our friends

from sinking; and, if it be Thy will, let there be no sinking funds. And keep my son Caleb out of evil company and gaming-houses; and sanctify this night to me by preserving me from thieves and fire, and make my servants honest and careful, while I, Thy faithful servant, lie down in peace. So be it.'

But the *Hibernian Magazine* not only gave items of Irish intelligence; it also conveyed news from the great London world; and the loyal subjects of George III. must have been delighted to read the following, dated June 1778 :

'This evening their Majesties, attended by nine of their beautiful offspring, were at Drury Lane Theatre to see *The Clandestine Marriage* and *Queen Mab*. The Prince of Wales, Bishop of Oanaburgh, and the Princes William and Edward, sat in the Prince's state-box. The Princess Royal, two other princesses, and two junior princes sat on the stage side of their Majesties' box, over which a separate canopy of blue and silver was erected for the occasion. The audience were so delighted with the illustrious spectacle that they received them with acclamations bordering on *idolatry*! Their attention during the play was principally directed to the sprightly sallies of the youngest but one of the princes. At the striking up of the music after the first act he went through all the fiddling motions, and afterwards laughed incessantly at every comic circumstance that occurred, which was repeatedly applauded by the admiring multitude. The pantomime of *Queen Mab* delighted all the little ones beyond expression. The youngest prince but one, perceiving Mr. King in Lord Ogleby attempting to open Fanny's door, which was locked,

cried out, "Kick, kick, and then they'll let you in!" which threw the house into an immoderate burst of laughter. Their Majesties appeared as much delighted as the audience on the above occasion.'

Anecdotes of that period seem to abound. In the year 1779 Dr. Fowler was Archbishop of Dublin, being translated in that year from Killaloe. He was remarkable for his strict discipline in Church government, and is said not to have been blessed with the best temper in the world, being overbearing and pompous in manner to his inferiors. Shortly after his elevation to the archbishopric he came to St. Patrick's Cathedral on a week-day at three o'clock. Finding that the gentlemen of the choir were not in attendance, and supposing that he had jurisdiction in the church, he thus called the verger to him :

"Hullo, fellow, come here ! Where's the dean ?

"He's in the chapter-house, may it please your grace," stammered the quivering official.

"Tell him to come instantly and attend me here."

Away went the verger to the dean, whom he found sitting in a room in the chapter-house with Dr. Ledwich, then one of the minor canons.

"Please your reverence, Mr. Dean, his grace the archbishop requires your presence immediately in the cathedral."

"Present my compliments to his grace," replied the dean, "and say if he wants to see the dean he will find him here."

The verger returned and delivered the message verbatim to the archbishop, who could scarcely conceal his anger at the want of respect which he considered the dean had shown him. He made up his mind, however, to proceed to the chapter-house ; and, on en-

tering the room where the dean and Dr. Ledwich were sitting, addressed the former as follows :

"Ho, Mr. Dean, what's become of the men of the choir ? Why are they not at the cathedral ? Let them know in future I shall require them to be present in the choir every day at three P.M."

The dean, who was calm and dignified in manner, replied,

"Please your grace, the gentlemen of the choir are not accustomed to attend on week-days unless specially informed that their services will be required ; and I apprehend you will find that I am the person who am authorised to enforce their attendance."

The archbishop made no reply to this observation, but, evidently mortified at the mistake he had made, retired. Dr. Ledwich, who was a man of considerable humour and wit, lost no time in thus reducing the dialogue which he had heard to verse :

Archbishop.

"Mr. Dean," said his grace,
New-fangled in place,
"What's become of the men of the choir ?
Let them know, sir, I pray,
That henceforward, each day,
Their attendance at three I desire."

The Dean.

"Please your grace," said the Dean,
"The matter is plain—
They're not used to attend here at three.
I, besides, apprehend
That to make them attend
Is a right belongs only to me."

Moral.

A Fowler of fame,
For taking good aim,
Should be careful his sport not to spoil,
Nor, when his gun's large,
His piece to discharge,
Lest its force on himself might recoil."

Dr. Ledwich's verses soon became known, and Dr. (afterwards Sir) John Stevenson, having obtained a copy, composed a catch for the words, which for many years was sung at the festive meetings of the vicars choral as a sort of charter-song.

C. J. HAMILTON.

A POLISH NOVELIST.

KRASZEWSKI.

KRASZEWSKI is the first of contemporary Polish novelists in the estimation of his compatriots. He is a notable member of that brilliant coterie of Polish writers who arose towards 1828 in the wake of Mickiewicz, Slowacki, and Krasinski, and who, like their fore-runners, made it their aim to arouse a love for, and interest in, their country. Kraszewski was born at Warsaw on July 26, 1812, and was educated at Wilna. His studies completed, he settled on his estate in the province of Volhynia, and devoted himself entirely to literature. He has by no means confined his energy to novel-writing, but wandered over various fields, winning spurs in all. Poetry, drama, philosophy, history, criticism, philology, are among the various departments he has touched. Journalism also attracted him; it gave him scope to ventilate the grievances of his countrymen, to vindicate their claims to European attention, to arouse interest among his own nation in literature and art. In 1859 he even became editor of a daily paper—a post he retained until 1864, when he left Poland to live in Dresden.

Kraszewski is a totally new apparition among his countrymen. Their fictitious literature had, up to his time, been entirely founded upon imitations of romantic French novels, rendered yet more romantic and more wildly impossible by their transplantation into a foreign soil. There was no reality in the

life they depicted; they reproduced, bluntly, blindly, what they had read in such fashion, according to Kraszewski's own dictum, 'as are reproduced on pocket-handkerchiefs the works of the great masters.' Kraszewski rose above these tendencies. It was he who first looked at home for subjects, for inspirations, and thus became the Polish novelist *par excellence*. He took his themes from Polish family and national life; he mirrored forth faithfully their excellences, but also their defects. The moral and social conflicts that agitate his nation are scrupulously reproduced in his pages. A sincere and ardent patriot, he is not blind to the serious and deep-rooted faults of his countrymen, and he shows them with relentless vigour how these sap their vitality, their possibility of national existence. He is not afraid to tell them unpalatable truths; and while encouraging the aspirations of young Poland, he points out its dangers with a warning voice. But beside the present, Kraszewski loves to paint the Polish past, to keep alive the traditions of the country. Above all he loves to depict the time of Stanislaus Augustus and the Elector of Saxony. *Morituri*, one of his longest and most noteworthy novels, is founded on events occurring in the reign of the former monarch. The scene is laid at Warsaw, and presents vivid pictures of contemporary society. The story deals with

the decline of a princely family, of which it furnishes a fine description. Of late years, indeed, Kraszewski has devoted himself almost wholly to historical romances, and on this domain it is claimed for him that he resembles the elder Dumas. The comparison, however, scarcely holds. He has not the fire, the wonderful imagination of the Frenchman, and, on the other hand, he is more historically correct. At the present time this veteran novelist has undertaken a vast task, much resembling in character Freytag's cycle of *Die Ahnen*. He too wishes to present to his countrymen, in novelistic form, a series of romances, of which the various subjects are to be derived from successive epochs of Polish history. Excellent and accurate though these historical romances are, they are not as good as Kraszewski's earlier writings. The scenes of many of these are laid amid the forests and villages of Lithuania, whose people have preserved uncontaminated the best traditions of the Poles, and among whom patriarchal customs still linger.

Since he has lived at Dresden Kraszewski has issued, under the pseudonym of Boleslawita, novellettes describing the latest phase of the Polish revolution and the rising of 1863, bringing into prominence, with much force, the inherent and national differences between Russians and Poles. Indeed, occasionally this is done in too polemical a fashion, considering the framework wherein it is introduced. He points out the various and characteristic tendencies of the modern Pole, how he is frivolous, flighty, narrow-visioned, sincerely, but often foolishly, patriotic. He introduces his readers to secret conspirators, to prisons, to flight, to the pains of

exile; in short, he runs through the whole gamut of national misfortune. The burning Jewish question of Poland is also ventilated in his pages—a burning question truly in this country, where the numerical proportion of the Jews makes them of great moment amid a population whose language they rarely learn, and to whom they hence must remain eternal strangers.

The importance of Kraszewski as a national novelist is indubitably great. From the artistic point of view he is by no means without serious faults. His composition is loose; there is a want of dramatic power in his tales, which rather resemble verbal narration, and thus bear an Oriental impress. There is a feeling, in reading him, that he is appealing to a people who have much time to spare, who do not weary of details, and are not impatient when the same incident is retold by different personages. Indeed, this oral character is a recognised feature in Polish imaginative literature, and novels are called by a name that corresponds to recitation. There is a certain uniformity in his style, his dialogue lacks spirit; he also repeats himself too much, the same scenes and situations recur too often. This fault, however, is probably due to the enormous fecundity into which a great facility has betrayed him. Nevertheless, for all his faults, he is an interesting writer, if only for the strange and unaccustomed environment into which he leads us. Nor is this his only merit. He draws characters forcibly; he has a wide sympathy with the weak, uncertain, human heart; he has an eye for the picturesque, the characteristic, the true. The regard entertained for him by his own countrymen was amply attested some time ago, when the

occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his literary *début* was made quite a national festival.

The story from which we quote is one of his most popular folktales, *Jermola the Potter*. The scene of action is in a remote hamlet of Volhynia. Within the narrow framework of the story are introduced the various elements that form Polish society—the nobleman, the husbandman, and the Jew; and as a social photograph of Polish life, it has been universally praised by those best fitted to judge. The hero of the story, an old man, finds, like Silas Marner, a child laid at his doorstep; and, as with his English analogue, whom he in some degree resembles, except in the matter of avarice, the child becomes the centre of his thoughts and interests.

THE FOUNDLING.

Old Jermola walked slowly towards his tumble-down dwelling, his head full of the revived remembrances of his life.

It was neither a cottage nor a farm; rather a ruin, an old forsaken tavern, for some reason fallen into decay. Jermola was accustomed to this melancholy abode; he approached it without repugnance, turned the handle, and opened the door. Darkness already prevailed there; he struck a light, and kindled a few shavings that lay ready in the stove.

When the old man had kindled the shavings in the stove—for a light was regarded as an extravagant luxury—he cast a glance around to see whether everything was in order; took a pot, in which to warm his supper, which the old Cossack's wife had brought him from the village, or which he himself had cooked well or badly; seated himself on a stool by the fire, and began to say the Lord's

Prayer. The wind rustled in the branches of the pines and oaks in the garden; otherwise there was silence around. Jermola had become absorbed in thought over his prayer, when the silence was broken by the crying of a child, at first soft, and gradually becoming louder and louder. It was the voice of a whining infant, and was as near as though it were behind the door.

'What may that be?' said the old man to himself, interrupting his prayer and rising from his seat. 'So late at night? It cannot be a silly woman, who is going on to the rafts now with her child, or coming to me for medicine?'

He listened; but the whining neither approached nor retreated. Then the child must be lying close by. At this hour, on such a cold evening, surely no one could have put a cradle there. And the child's cry is so piteous.

'It must be an owl,' said the old man, returning to his seat; 'it is screeching up in an oak-tree, and yet I could swear that it is a child's voice. I call that a wonderful imitation.'

He listened again; the crying became plainer and more painful.

'No, that is not an owl; that is really beyond my comprehension; I must go and look; perhaps a misfortune has happened somewhere. Whatever can it be?'

With these words he sprang up quickly, drew his cap over his ears, took his stick in his hand, and, forgetting even his beloved pipe, ran out of the door. On the threshold he was already convinced that there could be no doubt about its being a poor child's whining, and not an owl's cry. The old man was quite overcome by this, and, led by the whimpering voice, he began his search, and saw, not far from the

little garden, something white under an oak. His old eyes had not deceived him ; on a little moss-covered elevation lay, wrapped in white swaddling-clothes, a crying infant.

A child—a child abandoned and exposed by its parents ! The old man's brain could not take that in. He was stupefied with amazement, surprise, pity, and sorrow ; he ran hither and thither, not knowing what to do. At last he took up the child, which, in consequence probably of feeling the movement, immediately ceased crying. Like a thief with his stolen property, forgetting even his stick, old Jermola ran into his room, still repeating, ‘A child ! a child ! What can it mean ?

Suddenly the idea occurred to him that perhaps the child had only been deposited by its mother for a moment, for some reason or other, and she would be uneasy if she did not find it again. He now began to call loudly, and to knock his fingers in the Polish manner, so that the echo recalled to him his shepherd-days ; but no one answered.

‘I cannot expose the poor thing to the cold any longer,’ said he feelingly ; ‘I will go into the cottage ; perhaps something may occur to me which will bring me on the track.’

He opened the door ; the fire was extinguished in the stove, the room was in darkness. He quickly deposited his burden on the bed, and fanned the fire into a flame ; this time sparing no shavings. When the room was again light, the old man hastened to the crying child, and then his surprise and terror reached the highest point. This was evidently no villagechild ; the swaddling-clothes alone proved that. Jermola could not understand how and why a mother or a father could make up

their minds to reject so small and innocent a being, the mere sight of which made him weep with pity and emotion.

In fact, from the moment when he heard the first cry, a strange feeling had come over the old man, generally so calm : he was excited, terrified, and yet new life had come to him ; he seemed twenty years younger. Filled with curiosity, he approached the mysterious creature, that Fate, taking pity on his loneliness, had granted him as a consolation, while he was seeking some tie to bind him still to the world. The child was carefully wrapped up, but in such a manner that even its wraps gave no clue to its origin. The unnatural mother or careless father had, with some remnant of care, wrapped the child in a large piece of thick white cotton, which only revealed a small part of the face distorted by crying. Jermola looked at the child with ever-increasing excitement, and continued to wring his hands. Then suddenly the thought occurred to him that he stood in need of good advice, that the crying baby must be hungry, and that to bear the burden so unexpectedly imposed on him was beyond his power. Like a sudden lightning-flash it was revealed to him that here was need of nurse, cradle, and motherly care, while his means would not permit him to supply all these. And then hired hands did not appear to him worthy to touch this divine gift, as this foundling child seemed to him. He considered himself the chosen father, whom Providence had destined for the poor orphan. The thought that the child might be taken from him caused him the greatest alarm.

‘No, I will give it back to no one ; it is my child—my own ! God has sent it me. I will not drive away the orphan.’

Quite overcome by this strange event, he was carrying the child up and down in the room, when a heavy packet fell out of the swaddling-clothes on to the ground. He almost dropped the child.

'So it is a rich man who has cast his own flesh and blood from him, and pays to have it taken off his hands.'

The old man became thoughtful; he tried his best to understand the world that he had hitherto known so little, and there came into his heart an intuition which in one moment revealed to him the whole blackness, misery, and sorrow of life.

'Good God!' thought he to himself, 'there might even be people who would take this from the orphan. No, no one shall know anything about it. I will keep the money till the child is grown up; I shall manage to rear it alone.'

He threw the gold into an old casket which stood near his bed, and in which he usually kept his few pence. Then he wrapped the child in his *oponcza* (cloak), and ran frightened and happy with it to the nearest cottage; there to take counsel with his neighbours.

There lived the wife of the Cossack Harassym, who was universally called, after her husband's rank, the Kozaczicha. She lived there with her only daughter.

Fortunately Jermola did not meet a living creature before the Kozaczicha's door, as he approached the cottage breathlessly with the crying child.

Only the flickering fire shining through the window showed that the mistress was at home, and the old man entered with his burden. The Kozaczicha sat on a bench near the table, leaning on her arm, lost in thought. Horpyna sat by the stove. Both were silent and

sad; but a glance at Jermola, entering with the child on his arm, sufficed to rouse them and move them to a cry of astonishment.

'What is it, old man? What is that?' asked the mother.

'What—what?' exclaimed Jermola, sinking into a seat and laying the child on his lap without taking his eyes from it. 'Look, and see what it is; it is a child that God has given me.'

'What! you?'

'It is a miracle. But I do not know what to do. When I came back from the raft by the river I lighted my fire, and began my prayer, when I heard something crying under the oaks. "It is an owl," I say to myself; "they build their nests in the old oaks." I continue my prayer, but the whining recommences. I could not keep still; I became anxious; ran to the spot. I seek and look, and see there—I find a child. What am I to do now?'

The two women, the old and the young one, listened full of curiosity to Jermola's words, and shook their heads in silence.

'Some one has exposed it,' exclaimed the old woman; 'but who?'

'But who could throw down a child like that?' exclaimed the old man indignantly. 'Is such a thing possible?'

'O, O, we know such people,' answered the old woman, shaking her head. 'Much worse stories even are told of people's wickedness. Have you never heard of the new-born baby that the unnatural mother threw into the trough to feed the pigs, so that no trace of her shame might remain?'

Old Jermola looked amazed, with his eyes wide open, at the Kozaczicha, and shrugged his shoulders. Meantime the two

women knelt down by the child, to examine it more closely.

'What a white cloth it is wrapped in!'

'How delicate it is!'

'It must be a gentlefolk's child. Who of us would dare do such a thing? Besides, we have no occasion for it.'

'And to choose just the place by your cottage!'

'But advise me what to do,' begged the old man.

'Well—what you like,' answered the Kozaczicha. 'You can take it to the steward; he will make it over to the magistrates, and they will place it in some hospital.'

'Place it in some hospital!' exclaimed Jermola, trying to restrain himself. 'You are fine counsellors! And who is to see to it there, and take care of it? They might even let the poor creature starve.'

The old woman shrugged her shoulders.

'But how will you get advice about the child?' asked she.

'That is just what I am asking you, my friend.'

'What do you think?'

'How should I know what to think? There is a mill-wheel turning in my head. On no account whatever would I cast out this child that God Himself has given into my charge, yet I do not know whether I shall succeed in tending it; still it does not seem to me quite impossible.'

'You must find a nurse for it. Jurek's wife would be a suitable one.'

'On no account,' exclaimed Jermola; 'that bad woman would torture the poor little thing to death, and, besides, want I know not how much money; and as it is, my pence go one after another. If you would give it a little milk—just look how it is

twisting and turning itself—perhaps it would drink; then I could buy the milk from you.'

The Kozaczicha burst out laughing.

'What! Do you mean to tend it, amuse it, nurse it, rock it, yourself! And then, as if that were all that had to be done! A child is always giving one something to do. I remember the trouble I had with my oldest, my poor Tymoszek, who did not live a year; and then with Horyna—no peace, night or day.'

'As if I slept much or worked so very much!' answered the obstinate Jermola, whose new-found treasure was every moment becoming more precious to him. 'A few hours' sleep are more than enough for me; and a little child like this goes on sleeping, so long as it is not hungry. I shall find time enough to sleep a little, and to see after the garden, and roast a few potatoes.'

'But what do you mean to feed it with?'

'Well—with milk.'

'But if it cannot drink yet? It is so tiny.'

Jermola sighed.

'Well, what we cannot do, we learn. But give me better advice.'

The Kozaczicha took the crying baby in her arms and looked at it with pleasure; the daughter ran to fetch some new milk, and in so doing let fall a word to her neighbour, who carried it on, so that soon the neighbours, attracted by curiosity, came first singly, then in pairs, and at last in crowds, and surrounded the old man. Since the village existed, nothing similar had ever occurred, as far as the oldest inhabitant could remember; nor had they ever heard of any such thing. There was a continual talk and buzz. Every one came with good advice: the magistrate, the elders

of the commune, the women and boys, each tried to talk down the other; the same thing was discussed again and again, and the majority agreed with the Kozacizcha, who recommended Jurek's wife as the nurse. And what desperate conjectures, what bold assertions, what jokes and votes of censure, were passed on the dishonourable parents! But no one could bring forward any well-founded suspicion. No stranger had been seen in the village that evening; the streets were deserted; neither in the inn nor at the ferry had any travellers been seen. After a long discussion, the assembly broke up to go and carry the important news abroad. Only the old Chwedko remained behind, well known as the owner of the shaggy mare. Leaning on his stick and slowly collecting his thoughts, he said to Jermola,

'Something has occurred to me. It must be about twenty years ago since I heard of it. In Malycezak a man I knew was left a widower; his wife had just died, after giving birth to a little daughter. The poor distressed man could not find any nurse for it: he went from cottage to cottage; no one would take in the orphan; he had not even a cow to feed it with milk. Do you know what he did? With the last rouble that was left from the funeral he bought a goat, and brought up his little daughter on its milk; now she is one of the finest girls in the neighbourhood.'

Jermola sprang up in delight.

'Come, bring me the goat!' exclaimed he eagerly. 'Is there a goat to be found anywhere? I will buy a goat!'

'The landlord of the inn has a goat.'

'This is no time to dawdle. I will go and buy it.'

He was already at the door, when the Kozacizcha and Chwedko held him back together.

'By no means,' exclaimed the peasant; 'the Jew will fleece you dreadfully if he sees how much you need the goat.'

'Let him take what he likes, so long as he gives me the goat.'

'You will have to give him your last shirt,' the Kozacizcha interrupted the eager old man. 'Do you not know Schmul? He is a bloodhound; there is not another like him among the Jews. Gently, for God's sake tell him some lie; say you want it for breeding, or you will have to pay as dearly for it as for a cow.'

'I will go with you,' said Chwedko. 'You shall see we will get the better of the Jew.'

'But what shall we do with the child?'

'Do not be afraid; leave it with us, no harm will come to it.'

'Take pity on it, mother,' said Jermola. 'Be careful, I beg of you.'

'What, are you going to teach me? Is it my first child? I will pour some milk into its mouth, if it is only by drops; then I will lull it to sleep. Do not distress yourself.'

'I shall be back in a moment,' assured Jermola; 'but I implore you to see that no harm comes to the child!'

The old woman could not help laughing at his anxiety. Not till he left the house did he remember how long it was since he had smoked. He drew out his pipe, which he always wore in his bosom, filled it quickly, began to smoke it, and then, in spite of the darkness of the night, hastened with Chwedko to the inn, situated in the middle of the village.

It was fortunate that Jermola was accompanied by the much more cunning old Chwedko, who,

accustomed to the snares and wiles of the deceiver, had learnt prudence, and grudged neither time nor words if a penny could be saved. On the road already Chwedko gave Jermola good advice; to which he did not listen, for he was completely absorbed by the idea of possessing the goat. This improvised nurse, unfortunately a favourite of Sara, the landlord's young wife, and of her eldest son, who often pulled her beard, and had to put up with many a kick, was at most worth about twelve Polish gulden. Jermola was quite prepared to pay twenty for it; to which Chwedko did not much object, since the goat was not so very old, and gave good milk. But how was the proposal to be made to Schmul? He would have fleeced them to any extent, had he known of the urgent need. It was therefore necessary to deceive the Jew, to avoid being deceived by him. They approached the inn, when Chwedko became thoughtful, and begged Jermola to withdraw a little.

'Sit down near this cottage,' said he, showing him a seat. 'Wait here; I will go in first, and prepare the Jew. Do not be afraid; we shall manage it.'

Jermola took courage; trusted in Chwedko, who had so warmly espoused his cause; and seated himself on the spot indicated. He certainly needed rest and quiet. Leaning his head on his hands, and absorbed in thought, he now, for the first time for a long while, began to consider the future.

Chwedko first went into the tap-room, but Schmul was not there; only the goat was walking about. Opening the door of the state-room a little way, and wiping his feet, after asking permission, he stepped on to the threshold,

his hat under his arm, amid many bows. He remained carefully standing on the straw-mat—for the Jew became very angry when dirt was brought into his parlour. Thus he had fulfilled all the necessary conditions for being graciously received by Schmul, and the careful Chwedko did not forget ever to address him otherwise than as merchant; for Reb Schmul declared that the tavern business interested him but little, and he only lived in the village for his own amusement.

'Well, what does Chwedko bring?' asked the Jew from his seat, where he was swaying to and fro, like a pendulum, over a religious book. He interrupted his pious reading for the sake of gain, for he knew that God is more indulgent than man.

'Excuse me, sir, there is an opportunity.'

An opportunity is the expression used by the people for every unexpected occurrence—every event that gives an opportunity for drinking brandy.

'An opportunity! Well, what sort—christening, wedding, or funeral? I hope nobody is dead. I suppose you want brandy on credit?'

'No; I have heard something by chance, and wanted to acquaint you with it—perhaps a gain.'

'Well, what sort of gain?' broke in Schmul, rising and thrusting his hands in his belt as he approached.

'The gentleman' (this name pleased the Jew particularly) 'must know Jermola, the old man who lives in the tumble-down inn.'

'Why should I not know him?—a poor wretch!'

'That is true; but he has turned up a few roubles somewhere.'

'Well, does he want to spend them in drink?'

'Nothing of the sort. He does not drink brandy, but has taken into his head that he wants to buy a cow—half for credit, half for ready money.'

'A cow! What does he want a cow for?'

'He was just going off to the town about it. I prevented him, for an idea occurred to me.'

'To the town—always to the town!' exclaimed the Jew, shrugging his shoulders. 'Well, speak, Chwedko; what have you thought of?'

'I want to persuade him that it would be better for him, instead of buying a cow on credit, to pay money down for a milk-goat; then he will get milk and in time a kid. Perhaps you would sell him your old white one?'

Schmul looked straight into Chwedko's eyes, but he fortunately did not seem in the least confused; nor was it easy to suspect any fraud in such a proposal. The landlord merely put one question to him, destined to sound him:

'Is Jermola here—in the inn?'

'No,' was the quiet answer; 'he has been with his neighbours ever since midday; but, if you like, I may perhaps succeed in talking him over and bringing him here, although he is not very fond of coming to the inn. But perhaps you have no wish to sell the old goat. I only proposed it out of kindness. Why should the money go out of the village? But if you do not care about it, I will leave him alone, and he can go to the town.'

'But wait a moment, do wait,' said the Jew thoughtfully to Chwedko, who had already seized the door-handle. 'What will he do in the town?'

He called Sara into the room,

and she entered with the air of a spoilt child. They conversed together in their jargon; the Jew speaking gently, his wife very sharply. Chwedko tried to guess, by their gestures and voices, how matters stood; but did not succeed. Soon the Jewess left the room, and Schmul turned once more to Chwedko.

'You are a good fellow,' said he, patting Chwedko on the shoulder. 'If you want brandy on trust I will credit you for a whole rouble, do you hear? Bring Jermola to the inn; the goat is there; he is sure to be pleased with it. A very good goat. How much money has he?'

'I do not know exactly,' answered Chwedko. 'I believe he had about twenty Polish gulden, and the Kozaczhichia was going to lend him something.'

The Jew shook his head silently, and sent off the peasant, who hastened to his friend. Soon after Chwedko and old Jermola entered the tap-room. The latter was trembling like an aspen-leaf, and was ashamed of the comedy he was about to perform for the sake of the goat. His first glance fell upon its grave form; and he would certainly have betrayed himself if Schmul had noticed it, but he fortunately was consistently playing his assumed part, and had turned his back to the newcomers.

'Good-evening, sir,' said Chwedko.

'Good-evening.'

Schmul turned round and muttered something in his beard.

'Well, shall we drink a drop?' asked Chwedko.

'I seldom drink,' answered Jermola; 'but, for the sake of company, give us something, Marysia.'

'I hear you are going to the fair,' began Chwedko again. 'You

must have something to set you up for the journey.'

'Well, what do you want at the fair?' asked Schmul. 'If you have something to sell I will buy it of you.'

'No, I have some other business.'

'And if you have,' exclaimed the Jew, 'must you go off at once to the town? You are all of you so ready with the town. Do you want to buy something?'

'I tell you what, sir,' said Chwedko, 'my friend wants to buy a cow. He is dull, and he wants some worry and anxiety.'

'What do you want a cow for?' asked the Jew.

'Bah, it is a convenience, and may be profitable.'

'Good God!' exclaimed Schmul, stretching out his hands, 'it is plain enough that you have never yet had a cow, and do not know what it means to feed a cow. You must find a cow-boy for it. Well, consider what that costs; then the creatures always come back hungry from pasture; then you must buy hay—and hay is as dear as saffron just now; you must buy chaff, and that costs 10*d.* a sack; you must buy clover, and I do not sell that for less than 40*d.*—every one pays me that. Then you must give it green-stuff and potatoes, otherwise it will grow thin. Then it may get ill and not have a calf; and, in any case, for half a year it will not give a drop of milk.'

'But still I should have a calf and some milk.'

'But who will take care of it?' asked the Jew, shrugging his shoulders.

Jermola seemed convinced, and scratched his head meditatively.

'Is not that exactly what I told you?' said Chwedko. 'Cattle bring nothing but worry to poor people—nothing but misery.'

'If only I could have a calf and a little milk!' said Jermola.

'That is easily said,' continued the mediator. 'Nothing is so good for milk as a goat, I can tell you. In the first place, it does not cost much, and can live on anything—stalks, weeds, rubbish. Then it gives no trouble; and when you have drunk your fill of goat's milk, at least you know that you have drunk something. How it smells! How healthy it is!'

'There you spoke a true word,' said the innkeeper slowly. 'I tell you there is nothing better than a goat. We have discovered that already; and we generally keep goats. But that is the way of people; they look on and do not imitate; they have no sense in their heads. A goat is a real treasure.'

'Who knows, perhaps I shall turn the matter over and buy a goat,' said Jermola slowly.

'It is the best thing you can do!' exclaimed Chwedko. 'I tell you that is the most sensible plan. If Mr. Schmul would sell you his white one—'

'What can you be thinking off?' interrupted the Jew hastily, as though he had just caught the words. 'I would not give up my goat for all the money in the world. My wife, my children—they all love it; it is an invaluable creature; it is worth more than a cow.'

'It is a pity,' said Jermola, looking at the goat. 'Why should I have to drag myself to the town? My old legs can hardly carry me. Your goat might perhaps—'

'It is, indeed, a rare goat!' exclaimed the Jew. 'Have you ever seen such a goat? She is so sensible that you can talk to her; and her milk—you hardly know what that is! You will not find

one like her twenty miles round ; it is a treasure, and not a goat ! It is a phenomenon !

'But old,' remarked Jermola slowly.

'Old ! How old ? The old goats are the best. Why, how old is she ? She is really only just beginning her life ; she will live another twenty years !' exclaimed Schmul, becoming more and more excited.

'And what did she cost you ?' asked Jermola.

'What she cost me ? That has nothing to do with the matter. As a kid, she cost me two roubles. But you must know that she is not a common goat ; she belongs to a superior kind. I would not sell her for six roubles ; she eats hardly anything, and is always fat, and has two kids every year.'

A momentary pause ensued. Jermola looked about him, and did not know what to do next ; while he constantly cast glances at the goat, which continued to walk up and down the room, striking the ground with her hoofs, and poking her head everywhere where she perceived anything eatable. She collected remains of leaves, gnawed crusts, and bits of bread. We must do her the justice to say that she trusted in no one, and cared for her own maintenance.

'That would really be something for you,' began the broker Chwedko : 'she is accustomed to the village ; she knows the pasture ; she is experienced ; not very young either ; but gives very good milk.'

'Not a common goat,' added the Jew softly ; 'a superior kind.'

'But what a price !' exclaimed Jermola.

'Well, I will tell you what,' said the Jew, approaching hastily — 'you are a worthy man. I love and honour you ; the people

at the fair will fleece you. I will do something for you, and let you have the goat for three roubles. There, now do as you please.'

Chwedko, who had feared something worse, and was glad to come off so easily, added quickly,

'Come, shake hands upon it, and thank the merchant ; it is dirt-cheap. Pay him, and take it ; I do not grudge it you.'

'For my part, I am willing,' answered the old man ; 'only you must give me a cord to lead the goat home by.'

The unexpected bargain was struck. Jermola took three roubles out of a knot in an old handkerchief, and counted them out to Schmul. The Jew examined them, spit on them, as is customary, and put them in his pocket.

'But you must bring back the cord to-morrow,' he muttered, and folded his cloak round him, preparing to go back to the parlour.

'And the *mohorycz* ?' asked Chwedko softly.

'Jermola must pay that,' said Schmul ; 'but because he did not beat me down—well, you need not pay for the brandy you have drunk ; I have given you the *mohorycz*.'

Old Marysia brought a cord with a noose, which she used for carrying wood, and Chwedko closed the door, and tried to catch the goat, which, suspecting treachery, constantly eluded him. The Jew had taken himself off.

'Well, you two have made a fine bargain !' cried the old woman, when the innkeeper was gone. 'To pay twenty Polish gulden for an old goat ; you might have got three young ones for that at the fair.'

The old men were silent, fastened the cord round the goat's

horns, and set out with their booty. Jermola trembled with joy, the tears ran down his cheeks, and he kissed his friend.

'You have done me a great service; may God reward you for it!' said Jermola softly.

'But now I must not come into the Jew's sight any more,' sighed Chwedko, as he considered the danger to which he had exposed himself. 'Had we let drop a word about the child the infidel would have guessed everything, and have fleeced you finely.'

Talking in low tones, they returned to the Kozaczicha's cottage,

forcing the goat, who objected to leaving the inn, to obedience by various means. But soon after their departure the storm had broken out at the tavern; for Sara immediately acquainted her husband with the news she had just heard about the child found before Jermola's hut. Schmul knew at once that he had been taken in, and saw how necessary the goat had been. He bit his fingers with vexation.

'Well, take care, Chwedko, you scoundrel,' said he, shaking his head; 'unless I die, I will pay you with interest!'

'LOVE IS LIFE, AND LIFE IS LOVE.'

'Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.'

'YOUTH is a folly,' cried the sage;
 'A struggle is our middle age;
 Bitter regrets fill up the page;
 And this,' he sighed, 'is life.'

The man who finds existence such
 A weary struggling over-much
 Has never felt the magic touch
 Which love can give to life.

Another says that from life's cup
 In early youth we nectar sup,
 But that when this has been quaffed up
 A nauseous draught is life.

Just drop into your cup, dear friend,
 A little love, and then depend,
 True love, which loveth till the end,
 Will sweeten all the life.

G. V. S.

THREE WIZARDS AND A WITCH.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL, AUTHOR OF 'THE SENIOR PARTNER,'
'GEORGE GEITH OF FEN COURT,' ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

WILL HE PROPOSE?

It was to the house in Brunswick-square, which had for years been tenanted by the Jubbins, that Mr. Gayre repaired on the afternoon following his visit to Chislehurst. Opinion in Bloomsbury was divided as to whether the banker had proposed to the widow and been rejected, or was still making up his mind to put the momentous question.

Concerning the first alternative, Mrs. Jubbins could have enlightened her friends; but with regard to the second it was impossible for her to say, even mentally, aught save 'I hope and I fear.' There were days when she hoped, and there were days when she feared; yet as months and years glided away, she grew very sick with 'hope deferred.' She believed the man, the only man she had ever truly loved with the one love of a woman's heart, would some day ask her to be his wife; nevertheless, she did not quite understand him; surely that wound, which had changed the frank, brilliant, charming youth into a still more interesting, if less comprehensible, man, ought to have been healed long ago!

And now Mrs. Jubbins had some reason for believing he meant to marry her. Old Mr. Gayre, keeping to the letter of his promise, if not to the spirit, confided to Mrs. Higgs that 'my son Nicholas was thinking seriously of her daughter, and he, Mr.

Gayre, should feel glad if the young man proposed and Mrs. Jubbins accepted him.' To Mrs. Higgs, the idea of her daughter wedding into the Gayres seemed a thing almost too good to realise, and in her exultation at the suggestion she forgot to maintain that reserve Mr. Gayre had stipulated on. So Eliza was given to understand Nicholas had intimated he meant to 'think of her' and Nicholas, like his father, fulfilling the mere letter of his promise, did for a whole year think of his old playfellow with an ever-increasing dislike towards the connection. He did not want directly to cross his parent's wishes, but he felt to make Eliza Jubbins his wife would be to settle his own future in an utterly distasteful manner.

He liked the lady well enough—but liking is not love—and though he knew her money would be of use, both to himself and the bank, those thousands, made out of oil, repelled rather than attracted him. Then there were the juvenile Jubbins—commonplace in mind and features, spoiled, delicate, antagonistic, to his perhaps over-fastidious taste. Though the Bloomsbury world, or that other world quite away from Bloomsbury, with which he still kept up a friendly intercourse, did not suspect the fact, he had long outlived the old attachment Mrs. Higgs and her daughter often talked about with bated breath.

He was single, not from any actual objection to the married state, or fancy for one especial

fair, but simply because no woman calculated greatly to delight so stern and cynical a judge of the sex had crossed his path. Possibly he was looking for perfection. If so, he had certainly as yet not found it. Upon the other hand, seeing that mediocrity and commonplace virtues are often supposed to form a very good embodiment of a higher ideal, it seemed really hard he could not please his father and delight Mrs. Higgs, and return Mrs. Jubbins' attachment and reward her constancy; but all this appeared to Mr. Gayre impossible. The more he thought the matter over, the longer he contemplated himself hedged in by City notions, surrounded by a mere moneyed clique, tied to the apron-strings of Bloomsbury gentility—travelling life's road in company with the men he had to meet in business, and acting the part of a model stepfather to the Jubbins brood—the more truly he felt that, putting all question of romance, or love, or the glamour which does encircle some women, totally aside, such a marriage was, for him, out of the question.

At the end of a year from the time his father first broached the subject he was still 'thinking the matter over,' after which period all necessity for him to think about it ceased—his father died.

For six months after that event, Mr. Nicholas Gayre, a wanderer here and there, debated what he should do with his life: then all in a hurry he made up his mind; sold the lease of the Brunswick-square house, took another in Upper Wimpole-street, removed the furniture, books, plate, and china left to him under his father's will, and, with the help of three old servants, soon found himself much more at home than had ever been the case since he left the army and took to banking.

It was about this time Mrs. Jubbins' hopes revived. During the period when, according to his father's desire, he had been thinking of the widow as his future wife, Mr. Nicholas Gayre's manners became quite unconsciously cold and distant to the constant Eliza. Now no longer bound by his father's old-world 'notions'; free from the Bloomsbury servitude, wherein he had duly fulfilled his term; free to think and talk of other things besides money, and stocks, and investments, and commercial imprudence, and mercantile success; free, further, to marry whom he chose, or no one at all, Mr. Gayre grew quite amiable, and fell easily back into the familiar, though not close, intimacy which had marked his intercourse with the Jubbins family after his return from soldiering.

As a matter of course the good-looking Eliza took it for granted he would step into his father's place as adviser-in-chief concerning the Jubbins property.

The title-deeds, the scrip of all sorts, the shares, the trade secrets, were under lock and key in Gayres' strong-room. At Gayres' Mrs. Jubbins continued the account her husband formerly kept there. Had he felt curious about the matter, Mr. Nicholas Gayre might have ascertained almost to a penny what she spent, and how she spent it. There was nothing which pleased the lady so much as getting into a muddle, and being compelled to ask Mr. Gayre to help her out of it.

She made mountains of molehills in order to write notes to him, and, herself a most excellent manager and capital woman of business, tried to pass for one of the most incompetent of her sex. Mrs. Higgs died, and then, of course, Mrs. Jubbins needed ad-

vice more than ever. Two of her young people, spite of money and doctors and care, and everything which could be thought of to restore them to health, drooped and died. All these events retarded Mr. Gayre's proposal, no doubt; still, there were times when Mrs. Jubbins doubted whether he ever meant to propose. Had she known as much of the world as Nicholas, she would have understood friendliness is the worst possible symptom where a man's heart is concerned. Mr. Gayre had as much intention of proposing for one of the princesses as for the widow. Preposterous as the idea seemed in his father's lifetime, it seemed trebly preposterous now. He did not exactly know what she expected, though indeed he guessed; but he had long before made up his own mind that, so far as he was concerned, Mrs. Jubbins must remain Mrs. Jubbins till the end of the chapter.

A longer interval than usual had elapsed without his seeing her, when he turned his steps in the direction of Brunswick-square. As he approached the familiar door Mr. Gayre surveyed Mrs. Jubbins' residence with an amount of interest and curiosity he had never before experienced, and he certainly felt a sensation of pleasure at sight of windows clear as whiting and chamois and that other commodity, better than either, vulgarly called 'elbow-grease,' could make them, enamelled boxes filled with flowers on the sills, curtains white as the driven snow and of the best quality money could buy, spotless steps, polished knocker, and all those little etceteras which point to money, good servants, and a capable mistress.

'It is not Onslow-square, certainly,' thought Mr. Gayre, 'but we will see what we can do with it.'

'Now, this is really kind of you!' exclaimed Mrs. Jubbins—a handsome and well-preserved woman on the right side of forty—stretching out a white plump hand in greeting. 'You see, I am still unable to move,' she added, with a laugh which showed an exceedingly good set of teeth, pointing as she spoke to a stool over which a *courte-pieds* was thrown, in the modestest manner possible. 'Why, it is quite an age since you have been here!'

'Yes, indeed,' he answered, in his suave decisive manner—'almost three months. I fear you have been suffering much anxiety. Why did you not send for me sooner?'

'Well,' she began to explain—'well—' Then, after a pause, 'I know you must have so many engagements.'

'None,' he answered, 'believe me, that could ever keep me absent if you said you needed my poor services.'

Mrs. Jubbins had been a bold child, but she was not a forward woman. Quite the contrary. Supposing she could have won Mr. Gayre by saying, 'Will you marry me?' he must have remained unwon for ever, and for this reason she did not take advantage of his pretty speech, but merely inclined her sleek head in acknowledgement, as she asked,

'Have you been able to go to Chislehurst?'

'Yes,' he said. 'And The Warren is a most lovely place.'

'Which you would advise me to take?'

'If you really wish to go out of town for the summer, certainly.'

'Tell me all about it, please;' and the Jubbins relict leaned back on the sofa, crossed her hands, and closed her eyes.

She was worth—heavens, ladies, how much was she not worth?

—and could consequently, even in the concentrated presence of Gayre, Delone, Eyles, and Co., lean back, cross her hands, and close her eyes to any extent she liked.

Mr. Gayre looked at her not without approval—looked at her comely face, her broad capable forehead, her straight well-defined brows, her wealth of hair—not combed over frizettes, a fashion then still much in favour, but taken straight off her face to the back of her shapely, if somewhat large, head, and there wound round and round in great plaits almost too thick and long even for the eye of faith.

Such hair—such splendid hair—as Mrs. Jubbins possessed, quite of her own and altogether without purchase, belongs to few women.

Mr. Gayre knew it to be perfectly natural. He had been well acquainted with it in his youth, and in his experienced middle age he could have detected a single false lock; but there was nothing false about Mrs. Jubbins. All she had was as genuine as her money, as the Spanish mahogany furniture which had belonged to her husband's grandfather.

'As to The Warren,' proceeded Mr. Gayre, 'it is simply charming. A cottage in a wood; but such a cottage, and such a wood! Lord Flint, it seems, bought about twenty acres covered with trees, cleared a space on the top of the hill, and built a summer residence for his bride. Shortly afterwards he succeeded to the earldom; but still spent some portion of each year at the cottage, laying money out freely on the house and grounds. He died last summer; and as the widow does not now like the place—whether she liked it when her husband was living, I cannot say—she wants to let it; so there the house, fully furnished,

stands empty for you to walk into, if you like.'

At the mention of a lord, Mrs. Jubbins, who dearly loved nobility, old or new, opened her eyes and assumed an upright attitude.

'A place of that sort would be too grand and fine for me,' she objected, in the tone of one who wished to be contradicted.

'It is not at all grand,' answered Mr. Gayre, 'and the furniture is not fine. I daresay it cost a considerable sum of money; but really everything looks as simple and homely as possible.' And then he went on to talk of the gardens, and grounds, and terraces, and woods, finishing by remarking, 'Though quite close to London, one might be a hundred miles away from town, the air is so pure and the silence so utter.'

For a few moments Mrs. Jubbins made no reply. Then she said, with a delighted little laugh,

'Only fancy me living in the house of a real lord—not a lord mayor, but a peer!'

'It is a very nice house for any one to live in,' observed Mr. Gayre, wondering, if she rented the residence, how often in the course of a month she would mention Lord Flint, and the Earl of Merioneth, and her ladyship the Countess.

'Who would believe it!' exclaimed Mrs. Jubbins. 'And yet, do you know, I think I must have been dreaming of something of this sort. I have had the strangest thoughts lately. Whether it is this lovely weather following the long dreary winter, or being kept a prisoner by my ankle, or what, I am sure I cannot tell; but often of late I have found myself wondering whether I was doing right in staying so much at home, and spending so little money, and making no new acquaintances, and continuing the same round from year's end to year's end, as

though Brunswick-square were the world, and no other place on the face of the earth existed except Bloomsbury.'

Mr. Gayre smiled, and hazarded the remark that neither of them ought to speak against Bloomsbury.

'No, that is quite true,' agreed the lady; 'but yet, you see, you have gone west, and everybody else seems going west, or buying places out of town, except myself. The Browns have taken a house in Porchester-terrace, the Jones have gone to Bournemouth.'

'And the Robinsons no doubt will follow suit,' suggested Mr. Gayre, forgetful that Mrs. Jubbins' circle of friends did include a family of that name.

'Yes, Mr. Robinson is building himself quite a mansion down at Walton-on-Thames, and they expect to be able to move in August. I tell her she won't like it—that there is no place on the Thames to equal London; but they all seem eager to go; after a time there will be nobody left in Bloomsbury but me,' and Mrs. Jubbins sighed plaintively.

'You will not be left if you take The Warren,' said Mr. Gayre.

'I can't stay at The Warren for ever,' she answered; 'I shall have to come back here some day, unless—'

'Unless what?' asked Mr. Gayre.

'Unless I sell the lease of this house, and make up my mind to remove altogether. I really think I ought to make some change. The children are growing up, and ought to be in a neighbourhood where they could form pleasant acquaintances. Bloomsbury is all well enough for elderly persons; and the tradespeople are very good; I don't think you could get better meat anywhere than Grist supplies; and though Ida is not strong, I fancy that is only natural

delicacy, and has nothing to do with the air. But still—'

'If I were you,' interrupted Mr. Gayre, who always waxed impatient under details that had seemed both instructive and agreeable to his father, 'I should take this Chislehurst place for a year; at the end of that time you could decide whether it would be best to return here, or remain on there, or buy a house at the West-end. What lovely flowers! How they transform this dear old room! It looks quite gay and bright—'

'They make a dreadful litter,' remarked Mrs. Jubbins, who was a very Martha in household details, though to hear her talk at times any one might have supposed Mrs. Hemans took a healthy and lively view of life in comparison with the buxom Eliza—but they certainly do light up a house. The day before I sprained my ankle I went over to Porchester-terrace, and, dear me, I thought, what a difference between the West-end and Bloomsbury! When I came back our square seemed quite dingy; so I told Hodkins to arrange with some nurseryman to keep me supplied with plants. At first it did seem to me a dreadful waste of money, and I could not help wondering what your poor father would have said to such extravagance; but there, the world goes on, and one can't stand still and be left all behind, can one?'

'Gracious Heavens!' considered Mr. Gayre, 'if I had married her I should have been compelled to listen to this sort of thing all the days of my life;' then he said aloud, 'Talking of my father, I want you to grant me a favour; will you?'

'Certainly; need you ask? what is it?' And then Mrs. Jubbins paused abruptly, as the notion occurred to her that perhaps the

long-deferred hour was at last on the point of striking.

But Mr. Gayre's next words dispelled the illusion.

' You remember Margaret ?'

Hot and swift the tell-tale blood rushed up into Mrs. Jubbins' face, and as she said, ' Yes ; is she in London ? ' a duller but not less painful colour mantled Mr. Gayre's brow.

' I do not suppose Margaret will ever come to London,' he answered ; ' but her daughter is here, and I should consider it a great kindness if you would pay the girl a little attention. You know —or possibly you do not know—what a miserable, hopeless, irreclaimable sinner the father is. His own relations have cut him adrift, mine will have nothing to do with him ; consequently, through no fault of her own, my niece is, by both sides of the house, left out in the cold. I should like her to be intimate with a good sensible woman, such as you are ; but perhaps I am asking too much.'

' Too much ! I shall be enchanted to do anything in my power for Margaret's daughter. Is she like her mother, poor dear Margaret ? '

' My sister was pretty,' answered Mr. Gayre, with a feeling of deep gratitude swelling in his heart for the friendly warmth of Mrs. Jubbins' manner. ' My niece is beautiful. Her face does not seem so sweet to me as Margaret's ; but most persons would admire it far more. She is, in fact, so beautiful, so lovely, and placed in such a painful and exceptional position, that I shall not know a moment's peace till she is suitably married.'

' Dear, dear ! ' exclaimed Mrs. Jubbins ; ' I would go to her this moment if it were not for this tiresome ankle. Could not she

come to me, though, Mr. Gayre ? I am such an old friend of your family she might dispense with ceremony, and let us make acquaintance at once. If she spent a few days here, for instance, and then supposing I were to take Lady Merioneth's house, that would make a little change for her.'

' You are the kindest person in the world,' said Mr. Gayre, with conviction.

' No, indeed I am not ; only think, you know, if it were one of my own daughters. I am sure I quite long to see the dear girl. What a thing for poor Margaret to be parted from her own child ! '

' My niece believes her mother is dead, and there seems to me no necessity to enlighten her.'

' Ah ! that makes it all the worse. When I remember—when I look back and recall her lovely face framed in those sunny curls—'

' Looking back is worse than useless,' interrupted Mr. Gayre, speaking hoarsely and with averted eyes. ' We cannot undo the past ; the best plan is to act as prudently as possible in the present. That is why I ask your help, why I want you to look a little after the child of my unhappy sister.'

' And that I will,' declared Mrs. Jubbins heartily. ' It will be like having a daughter given to me in the place of my darling Clara ; a daughter to think and plan for and love. How I long to see her ! When do you think she can come here ? Will you bring her ? or shall I send a fly and Hodkins ? You know he really is a most superior and respectable person.'

This time Mr. Gayre forgot to smile at Mrs. Jubbins' singular way of putting things.

' I will arrange the visit with my niece,' he said, ' and give you due notice when you may expect

to see us. I am a bad hand at returning thanks; but I feel your kindness more than I can express.'

'It is nothing,' she answered vehemently, 'nothing at all; it is I who am obliged. All my life I have been receiving favours from your family, and doing nothing in return. You have made me so very happy. I wonder if you would mind my consulting you concerning another little matter I could not avoid thinking about while tied to this sofa?'

'I am all attention,' Mr. Gayre declared. 'What is this matter? Are you thinking of setting up a carriage?'

'Well, you must be a wizard!' exclaimed Mrs. Jubbins. 'Do you know, often lately I have been wondering whether my poor husband and your dear father would think a single brougham and a very plain livery too great an extravagance. You see things have changed so much during the course of the last few years. There was a time when all one's friends lived close at hand; but now one must have a fly to pay visits; and really a carriage and coachman of one's own would not cost so very much more.'

'My dear Mrs. Jubbins,' said Mr. Gayre, 'you talk as if you had to economise upon five hundred a year instead of being obliged to starve on twelve thousand.'

'Yes,' she answered; 'but there are the children, and I do so want to be a faithful steward, Mr. Gayre, and justify the trust reposed in me. Yet there are two sides to the question, I am sure. Our fathers moved with their times, and, as a mother, I ought to move with mine; and that brings me to what I wished to say—not about the carriage, it can wait; but—'

'Yes?' said Mr. Gayre interrogatively.

'You must promise not to laugh at me.'

'I am very sure I shall not laugh at what you say.'

'Well, then, I have been thinking most seriously whether, if I take a house out of town—and the doctor says I must—it would not be a good opportunity for changing my name.'

'I beg your pardon!'

No italics could indicate the astonishment expressed in Mr. Gayre's tone.

'Are you thinking of marrying again?' he went on—severely, as the widow imagined, but really in a mere maze of bewilderment.

'No—O no,' she said hurriedly. 'It is not likely I shall ever marry again—I am certain I never shall; but I cannot blind myself to the fact that the name of Jubbins is in many ways a bar socially. Put it to yourself, Mr. Gayre—Jubbins! Awful! All the years I have borne it have never reconciled me to the name. Higgs was not beautiful, but Jubbins is worse.'

"A rose by any other name would smell as sweet," quoted Mr. Gayre, resolutely refraining even from smiling.

'Not if it was called Jubbins,' answered the lady almost tearfully.

'Yes, it would,' persisted the banker; 'but whether or no, there are for the present, at all events, good and sufficient reasons why your late husband's known and honest name should be preserved. As you are aware, the formulae for making those wonderful oils lie at our bank. When your sons come of age they will want to make use of them. The name is associated with the product. It is of actual pecuniary value. The De Vere Oil, for example, would

not command any market. I have always admired many traits in your character, but none more than your excellent feeling. Give that fair play now. Just think what the name you bear has done for you.'

'I know—I know.'

'And do consider that, although you have an undoubted right at any moment to change your own name by marriage, you really have no right to change the name of your children.'

'O Mr. Gayre, how good and clever you are! how clear you make everything!'

'And speaking for myself,' added the banker, warming to his subject, 'I can only say that, though I liked Miss Higgs much, I like Mrs. Jubbins more.'

'You *are* kind!' exclaimed the widow, while the colour once more fluttered into her face, and, spite of her declaration that she would never marry again, she began to consider such an event not quite impossible. 'What, must you go? Well, you have given me a great deal of your valuable time, and I am very grateful to you.'

She could not rise on account of that troublesome ankle, and, as Mr. Gayre held her hand while he spoke some words of thanks, he was obliged to stoop a little, and—unconsciously perhaps—fell into an almost tender attitude.

Mrs. Jubbins' heart beat so fast and so loud, she felt afraid he would hear it. The long-expected declaration must surely be hovering on his lips!

That was a supreme moment. Never before had he retained her hand so long; on the contrary, he had ever previously held it as short a time as possible. Never had he before regarded her with a look of such admiration; never had his tone been so low, or his words so earnest, or—

Just then a tremendous double knock—prolonged, ear-splitting, infuriating—resounded through the house. Was ever knock before so unexpected and so loud? Mrs. Jubbins gave a start, which almost threw her off the sofa. Mr. Gayre dropped her hand as if he had been shot.

And, after all, it was no one coming up; only Mrs. Robinson's card, and kind inquiries after dear Mrs. Jubbins' ankle. Mr. Gayre saw that card lying on a salver as he passed out, excellently contented with his afternoon's work, but, upon the whole, not quite so well satisfied with himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

FATHER, DAUGHTER, UNCLE.

'Is your father at home, Margaret?'

It was Mr. Gayre who asked this question. He had gone straight from Brunswick-square to North Bank, debating that matter of his own conduct all the way.

When he left the City he fully intended to have 'a few words' with his niece; but he did not feel his own hands quite clean enough at the minute to cast stones at her, and accordingly would have deferred the operation till a more convenient season but for the action taken by the young lady herself.

'Yes; papa has not gone out yet,' she said, in answer to his inquiry. 'I will tell him you are here;' and she left the room, but, changing her mind, returned almost immediately, and, closing the door, observed, with a confusion which for once was not feigned,

'I want to say something to you, uncle.'

'Say on then, my niece,' he returned.

But she hesitated, looking at him piteously for help, till at last he felt compelled to ask,

'Well, what is it?'

'Can't you guess?'

'Whether I can or not, I decline to do anything of the sort. Come, say what you have got to say, and let us be done with the matter.'

'It is—about—Susan Drummond.'

'Yes; what about her?'

For one moment Miss Chelston doubted whether he remembered, and lamented her own folly in not letting a sleeping dog lie; but the next she felt sure he could not have forgotten, and said,

'You must have thought it so odd that I did not tell papa I had seen her.'

'Did I? No, I do not think I did. I wonder now why you told him such a lie; but I presume you had some reason, good or bad, for not wishing him to know.'

'I was wrong,' she confessed, in a tone of the deepest humility; 'but indeed I acted from the very best motives.'

'It would be interesting to know what those motives were; but I suppose you won't tell me.'

'O yes, indeed—indeed I will; I have been longing to tell you. Susan and I are the oldest and dearest of friends—I may say she is the only friend I have in all the wide world. I understand her perfectly; and the reason I did not want papa to suspect she was in London—'

'Out with it,' advised Mr. Gayre.

'Well, you see, at the time I thought things would be different here. Papa told me we should have a great deal of company, and

that I would be asked out to parties and—and—all that sort of thing; and I knew, since her uncle's death, poor dear Susan could not afford to dress—as—as people have to dress if they go into society; and I thought asking her to come to us would only vex and place her in a false position.'

'Anything else?' suggested Mr. Gayre.

'Yes; but you must not be vexed with me. I do hate riding, and I was sure papa would be wanting me to go out with Susan; and I dare not—O, I dare not! That horse you so much admired almost frightened me to death.'

'You are quite sure you have nothing more to tell me?' said Mr. Gayre, as she came to a full stop.

'Quite sure—quite sure indeed.'

Mr. Gayre looked her over with an amused smile. She did not lift her eyes to his, but stood with them cast penitently downwards, waiting for any comments he might have to make.

'I think,' he began at last, 'there is some truth in what you have just been saying, but I fancy there is not much. Now let me give you a little advice. Don't try to hoodwink me. In the first place, it is a mere waste of time; and in the second, you will find it to your advantage to work with, instead of against, me. All I desire is your good. You are placed in a most difficult and exceptional position, and you have not so many friends you can afford to quarrel with any of them, more especially a girl like Miss Drummond.'

'Quarrel, uncle! I wouldn't quarrel with Susan for all the world; but how could I know living in London would turn out

so different from what I expected—so miserable!' ended Miss Chelston, with a gasping sob.

' You expected, perhaps, to be presented at Court?' hinted Mr. Gayre, with bitter irony.

' I did not think it was at all impossible,' she answered.

' And what do you think now?' he asked.

' That I have been very silly; and O, it's all such a dreadful disappointment!' and, covering her face with her hands, she left the room fairly in tears.

' It is hard on the girl,' thought Mr. Gayre, ' and why should I have expected straightforwardness from her? The father does not know the meaning of the word; the mother was a poor weak timid fool; and I—well, my friend, I don't consider you have much reason to be proud of yourself.'

' So you have sent Peggy off crying,' said the Baronet cheerfully, opening the door at this juncture; ' I am very glad of it. Hope you gave her a good scolding. As I told her yesterday—for I had an appointment after I got back from Enfield the other day, and was not home till long after she had gone to bed—as I told her, there is nothing in the world I detest like a falsehood. Let a man or a woman only speak the truth, and I do not much care how bad he or she may be in other respects, though no one who does speak the truth can be very bad.'

' I think we may let the affair rest now,' remarked Mr. Gayre. ' More particularly as Miss Drummond ought never to know Margaret's silence was other than a piece of carelessness. It will be a great matter for your daughter to have so nice a friend staying with her. Have you settled when she is to come?'

' Yes. Peg wrote her as pretty

a note yesterday as you'd wish to read. O, she was humble enough, I can tell you. It's not often I do come the stern parent business, but I did speak out. I said, "If you think because Susan has only got a poor couple of thousand pounds she is not as welcome to my house as though she had millions, you are very much mistaken, that's all. I'm sorely afraid, Peggy," I went on, "you're an arrant little snob; and you don't inherit that failing from me any more than your want of candour. No one can say I ever held myself aloof from any man because he was not rich or well-born. What's the use of being well-born if one can't shake hands with a beggar?" No, that girl of mine wants taking down. She does think so confoundedly much of herself.'

' It seems to me she has been taken down a great deal,' observed Mr. Gayre. ' She evidently came to London expecting to carry all before her; and, spite of your agreeable manners and large circle of desirable acquaintances, she finds herself alone in a great city, without a soul to speak to. However,' added Mr. Gayre hurriedly, to prevent his brother-in-law once again taking up his parable, ' I have at last succeeded in getting her one invitation, which I hope will lead to more. As we can't induce rank to notice her, I determined to try money. Mrs. Jubbins of Brunswick-square, a lady I have known all my life, will be delighted to do anything and everything she can for Margaret.'

' Come, that's encouraging,' exclaimed the Baronet, ' though Jubbins does not exactly seem a name one would find in *Burke*, and Brunswick-square is a little—eh?'

' If you mean that it is not Belgravia, you are right; but as

no duchess has rushed forward to chaperone your daughter, it may be prudent to try and make the best of rich respectability.'

'Why, my dear fellow, how you talk! Any one, to hear the way you go on, might imagine I was particular! Thank God, I am no such thing! I do not worship rank or money. And so your friends are very rich. What is the husband?'

'I don't know what he may be at present; he is dead; he was a most excellent person when living.'

'Widow! Bless me, why don't you make up to her, Gayre?'

'Well, there are several reasons. One, however, may seem sufficient. She says she is not going to marry again.'

'Pooh!' commented Sir Geoffrey, with airy incredulity.

'At all events, she has let seven years pass without making a second choice.'

'The right man has not asked her,' remarked the Baronet, with decision; and he shook his head with such emphasis that Mr. Gayre knew he was thinking if his wife 'gave him a chance,' and the fortune proved sufficient, he himself would attempt Mrs. Jubbins' conversion, and with brilliant success.

'She is a truly admirable woman in every relation of life,' said Mr. Gayre.

'I am thankful to hear it—most thankful,' answered Sir Geoffrey solemnly. 'What a fortunate fellow you are, Gayre, not to be saddled with the responsibility of a daughter! I declare the future of mine is getting to be a nightmare to me. What on earth would become of poor Peggy if I died?'

'It is extremely difficult to say,' observed Mr. Gayre, too wise to be entrapped into any promise by his simple brother-in-law.

'And we must all die,' pursued the Baronet tentatively.

'So it is said; but there is no rule without an exception, and you may prove that exception.'

Sir Geoffrey digested this remark, and, deciding he would not make much out of Mr. Gayre on such a tack, said, in a frank sort of manner, as if the idea had only just occurred to him,

'I really don't know that I should object to a City man as a husband for my girl if he could insure her a proper establishment.'

'It is extremely good and wise of you to say so.'

'You see I can give her no fortune.'

'And, as a rule, money expects money nowadays.'

'Upon the other hand,' proceeded Sir Geoffrey, 'she is my daughter.'

'So she is; that is a great advantage,' said Mr. Gayre.

For a moment it occurred to the Baronet that his brother-in-law was openly gibing him; but looking sharply up, he could see no hint of laughter in the calm, cold face.

'And a title must always carry a certain weight,' he ventured.

'But your daughter has no title, and as for yours—knights and baronets have in the City become somewhat of drugs in the market. What can Margaret, without a penny of dowry, do for any man? You have no property left for him to talk about. Your daughter has no social standing; she possesses the manners of a gentlewoman, I admit, and is extremely good-looking. Nevertheless—'

'For Heaven's sake, Gayre, don't make me more wretched than I am! It was my misfortune, not my fault, I didn't marry

into my own rank of life, in which case my relations *must* have seen to the girl. But as matters stand—'

'I think, Sir Geoffrey, I will wish you "good-afternoon,"' interposed Mr. Gayre, rising in hot wrath, and striding across the small room to the door, with the almost forgotten military gait.

But ere he reached it, Sir Geoffrey caught him.

'My dear, dear Gayre—' he began; and then, as his dear Gayre wrenched himself from his detaining grasp, and reached the hall, the Baronet, once again seizing his sleeve, went on, 'You have misunderstood me quite.'

Mr. Gayre, however, was not so easily to be appeased. Standing in the middle of the gravelled path, sheltered from the vulgar gaze by that high wall already mentioned, he delivered his parable. He rehearsed the righteous doings of the Gayres, and the sins of Sir Geoffrey.

'Good God!' he cried, and certainly, as a rule, Mr. Gayre was no profane swearer, 'if my father had liked he could have given you seven years' penal servitude over that matter of my sister's settlement. But he refrained; and yet now you talk as if you had made a *méalliance* by entering a family able to trace a longer pedigree than your own.'

Through a little pantry-window, almost screened from the sight of visitors by a goodly arbor vitæ, Lavender watched the progress of this wordy war, saw Mr. Gayre's impatient and angry movement, and his master's deprecating gestures, and the humble and almost cringing servility of his manner.

'Sir Geoffrey's gone and done it now,' he considered. 'Ah! I knew it was too good to last. He'll be off in a minute more, and

I suppose we'll never set eyes on him here again.'

And indeed departure seemed imminent. Mr. Gayre had his hand on the lock of the gate, and, spite of Sir Geoffrey's efforts to detain him, was evidently bent on making his way into the road; but just as he had turned the handle, and was on the eve of leaving Mr. Moreby's borrowed villa for ever, Margaret, her eyes still a little red, but her dress as usual perfect—Margaret, with one rose in her hair and another in her girdle, looking fair and fresh, and pathetically humble, came round the end of the house, and exclaiming, 'O uncle! you won't go without a cup of tea,' changed her own destiny as well as that of others.

'You can't refuse *her*,' remarked Sir Geoffrey *sotto voce*. 'Upon my soul and honour, you took quite a wrong meaning out of what I said; and hang it, whatever I may be, she's your sister's child.'

'Have you two been quarrelling?' asked Miss Chelston, in quick alarm. 'Don't do that, don't—just too when I had made up my mind to be so good and nice and sweet to you both and everybody. Uncle, you mustn't mind papa. Really he was quite unpleasant to me yesterday. Papa, uncle, is in a bad humour: he scolded me half an hour ago till I had to go up-stairs and have a good cry by myself. Now come in to tea, both of you,' she finished, with a pretty, imperious, and yet caressing air which became her wonderfully, and caused Mr. Gayre to consider, 'After all, something may be made of her.'

'Come,' she repeated, taking Mr. Gayre's arm and leading him towards the house; 'and you may follow us, you bad man,' she went on, addressing her father, who, for answer, put his fingers within

the bit of black velvet she wore round her neck and gave it a twist.

Father and daughter did not exactly pull together, yet still, upon the whole, they understood each other pretty well.

Though the tea was lukewarm and extremely bad, Mr. Gayre swallowed one cup, exactly as he would have with some wild Indian smoked a pipe of peace. Sir Geoffrey refrained from partaking of the beverage offered for delectation, remarking his 'liver wouldn't stand it,' which, considering what he forced his liver to stand, seemed on the part of that organ an extraordinary act of rebellion; but he was good enough to go into the dining-room, and prepare a brew for himself that did not err on the side of weakness. This he drank a good deal faster than Mr. Gayre did his tea, while he drank communicating the good news of Mrs. Jubbins' invitation to his daughter, telling that young person she could never sufficiently prove her gratitude to the best of uncles, and, during the course of the conversation which ensued, artlessly inducing his brother-in-law to state many facts in connection with the state of the Jubbins finances he had not thought of imparting previously.

'By Jove, what a chance!' considered the Baronet; and then he proceeded to think, 'if her ladyship would only be kind enough to quit a world she never really adorned, I'd have a try for that quarter of a million—buried in the earth, as one may say—and I'd get it, or else know the reason why.'

Which only proves that even baronets may be liable to error. Sir Geoffrey thoroughly understood the weakness of human nature, but most certainly he failed to estimate its strength.

CHAPTER IX.

SUSAN.

SEATED in his library—a room which, in a bachelor's establishment, ever seems the pleasantest and most comfortable in the house—Mr. Gayre, on the evening of the same day when he fought Sir Geoffrey on his own ground, and felt, perhaps, ashamedly conscious of having led Mrs. Jubbins astray, or at least allowed her to stray, permitted his own soul the luxury of a day-dream. During the course of his life he had not indulged in many; and now and then a doubt would intrude as to whether anything could come of this vision, or if it would end like the others in grief and humiliation and disappointment. But in that quiet twilight hour doubt seemed exorcised. After all, why should happiness not be his? If in some things he had failed, in others he had succeeded; in no respect could he be accounted an unfortunate man. The stars in their courses had not fought against him as they did against Sisera. 'I ought to have no quarrel with Fate,' he thought, 'for Fate has done a great deal for me; and, perhaps,' he went on, contemplating his air-castle with an eye of faith, 'she has been keeping the great blessing of a good pure wife for the last.' Dreams, fair dreams! Were they only, after all, to be dreams? Was his day to end in darkness, unillumined by the golden beams of a mutual love? Was life to hold nothing for him of the beauty and the glamour with which only a woman can shed over it? 'Ah, no!' he murmured; and through the gloom it seemed to him that a figure, clad all in white, came gliding to his side; that a delicate hand lay clasped in his; that a pair of tender brown eyes looked wist-

fully in his face ; that a soft touch smoothed the coming wrinkles from his brow ; and that at last, tremblingly, he clasped to his heart the wife he had waited through the long lonely years to meet.

Already he felt as if he must have known her always. They were strangers no more. He heard her speak, and her voice sounded familiar to him. She smiled, and the waters of his soul reflected back the pleasant sunshine.

Had they, in some former and happier state of existence, wandered side by side through flower-decked meads and winding leafy lanes, it could not have seemed more natural to him than it did to find himself pacing the never before trodden fields of Enfield Highway, in which the mowers were busy with their scythes, filling the air with the delicious perfume of recently-cut grass. Her little tricks of manner and speech and look and movement struck him with no sense of novelty.

'I must have been acquainted with Susan Drummond the whole of my life,' he decided ; 'that is to say, for a good many years before she was born.' Her very name sounded to him accustomed ; homelike seemed its simple melody. Susan—Susan—Susan—Susan Drummond, with her fair honest face ; with her hair, which was neither brown nor yellow nor red, but a marvellous mixture of all three ; with her exquisite complexion and sweet tender mouth—he recalled them all ; and yet each individual and to be particularised beauty faded into nothingness beside the intangible and indefinable charm which had its source no man could tell where.

Had she been smitten with smallpox, or lost a limb, or be-

come suddenly old, Susan would have been Susan still. There are women who retain, whether in youth or age, some subtle and inexplicable essence of womanliness as far beyond analysis as the scent of a rose. Whatever the fashion of the earthly tabernacle her soul inhabits, nevertheless from the windows of even the poorest habitation some passer-by catches the glimpse of a countenance never for ever to be forgotten.

Mr. Gayre at all events felt he could not, while life lasted, forget riding along the Green Lanes and through Southgate, and thence, by many devious roads, into Enfield Highway.

'Are you quite sure where you're going, Gayre?' asked his interesting brother-in-law Sir Geoffrey, whom he had seduced into setting off on a wild-goose chase after a fellow who owned a wonderful hunter on the London side of Waltham.

'No, indeed, I am not,' answered Mr. Gayre despondently ; 'but I mean to inquire about my man at each public we pass.'

Which performance, greatly to the Baronet's satisfaction, was gone through duly and truly with negative success, till the pair reached a certain hotel, noted in the old days, that still did a roaring trade by reason of excursionists to the Rye House and Broxbourne Gardens.

'Does I know a gemman as owns a 'ansome bay 'unter? Why, in course I does—Squire Temperley, of Temperley Manor. But, Lord love you, sir, it ain't of no manner of use riding on to see 'im! 'E's been away—let's see—a matter of three week with the gout, which do nip him up sore.'

Mr. Gayre mused. 'It was not his fashion to rush into dialogue.

'What sort of looking man is your Squire?' he asked at length,

while he slipped half-a-crown into his informant's hand.

'Well, sir, 'e's not unlike yourself in build and figure, only 'eavier and a trifle more advanced in years'—Mr. Gayre winced; 'a very pleasant gemman, and most out and out rider; didn't mind taking in 'and any 'oss—got the most splendid 'unter to be seen in all these parts—a regular wild one; no person can to say really ride 'im but 'imself and young Mr. Arbery.'

'Young Mr. Arbery? Who is he? not Squire Temperley's son, of course?

'No, sir; Mr. Arbery is the son of Mrs. Arbery, Granston 'Ouse, just above 'ere. 'E's just back from the Australies, and we 'aven't seen yet the 'orse could throw 'im.'

Having with a commendable pride finished which statement, the ostler, whose manners happened to be of a more free-and-easy description than obtained in Lombard-street, was good enough to 'throw his eye over Mr. Gayre's steed,' and remark 'she was a tidy sort of beast, who I desay can go.'

'Well,' asked Sir Geoffrey, coming out of the bar, where he had been taking something 'just for the good of the house,' 'have you dropped on your friend's track yet?'

'Yes, I think so,' answered Mr. Gayre; and having received some further information on the exact position of Granston House, the pair departed, only walking their horses up the Great North Road, but nevertheless eliciting an observation from the ostler that 'he hoped he might be blanked if those gents didn't know something about riding.'

On they went past the church and into the older part of the village, which even so late as 1874 was little more than a mere strag-

gling street. They had got into the region of a few unpretentious shope, when Mr. Gayre started so suddenly that his mare sprang forward with a bound which elicited a profane inquiry from Sir Geoffrey as to 'what the — ailed the — brute.'

His brother-in-law did not answer. Apparently he was devoting his whole attention to 'the — brute,' but in reality his eyes were following two persons who chanced to be sauntering slowly along the footpath; one was a lady wearing a white straw hat and piqué dress of the same colour, both trimmed with black ribbon; the other the young fellow he had seen in the Park.

He had found his quarry, and yet, though he passed the pair so close that he could almost have laid his hand on Mr. Arbery's shoulder, he did not pull up and accost him.

Shyness was a fault from which, as a rule, the banker might be considered perfectly free; but at that moment he felt it impossible even to turn his head in the direction of the very persons he had come to seek.

Not so Sir Geoffrey. That woman must indeed have been old at whom he would have failed (to use his own expression) to take a squint; and, following his usual practice, he proceeded to honour with a hard stare a girl whom he had already decided possessed 'a deuced good pair of ankles'; then,

'Lord bless my soul!' he exclaimed, in a tone loud enough for all the village to hear, 'if it isn't Susan Drummond!' and Mr. Gayre, at last looking back, beheld Sir Geoffrey standing in the middle of the road, with his horse's bridle slipped over his arm, shaking both Miss Drummond's hands, and expressing his delight and wonder-

ment at meeting her in such an out-of-the-way place so volubly that he was well-nigh unintelligible.

' Gayre, Gayre,' he cried, ' stop a minute—this is Susan ; Susan Drummond, you know. By Jove, who'd have thought of coming across her here ! Susan, this is my brother-in-law ; gad ! I never was so surprised in all the days of my life ! What in the world are you doing in Enfield Highway ?'

Watching her, Mr. Gayre saw a shadow of disappointment creeping over her face, lit up the instant before with a delighted smile of pleasure.

' Did not Maggie tell you I was here ?' she asked.

' How should she know ?' demanded the Baronet.

' Why, I saw her one day in Hyde Park, about a month ago ; didn't she tell you ?' repeated the girl.

' Not a word ; if she had you may be very sure I'd have been down here before now. I—' and Sir Geoffrey was about to plunge into the whole story of Peggy's statement that she didn't know even the address of her old friend, when a look from Mr. Gayre arrested the words on his tongue.

' You know what a careless forgetful baggage it is,' he said, with great presence of mind, ' and how much fonder she always was of telling things to other people than her own father ; however, now I've found you, I won't lose sight of you again ; you must come over and see Peg, and have all out with her. Come and pay us a long visit.'

But Susan made no answer except, ' You are very kind, but you always were kind to me, Sir Geoffrey.'

' Papa Geoff,' amended the Baronet. ' Where are you stopping ? who are you with ? what are you

doing ? I am amazed. Who'd have thought of seeing you here ?'

' There is nothing remarkable in seeing me here,' she answered, ' but it is astonishing to see you. I should just as soon have expected Chelston Church spire coming up Enfield Highway as you. What can have brought you to this part of the world ?'

' My brother-in-law wanted to find some fellow about a hunter—' Sir Geoffrey was beginning, when Mr. Gayre interposed.

' This is the very gentleman I wanted to see, I think,' he said, looking towards Mr. Arbery, who had stepped into the background. ' As I did not know your name,' he went on, speaking to Miss Drummond's companion, ' we have had a great deal of trouble in finding out who you were and where you lived.'

' Well, it's all right now, isn't it ?' exclaimed Sir Geoffrey. ' Susan, my dear, I am so glad we came ; you can't think how pleased I am to see you again.'

' This is my cousin, Mr. Arbery,' she said, acknowledging the Baronet's hearty words with a smile which chased the shadows from her face ; and then, with a pretty grace, she introduced him to Mr. Gayre, which ceremony duly performed, they all walked on together to Granston House, where the young man said his mother would be delighted to see them.

It is more than doubtful whether Mrs. Arbery was anything of the kind ; nevertheless, she received the unexpected visitors with a good grace, and asked them to stop and take early dinner.

' We always dine early,' explained Will Arbery ; ' but you can call it luncheon ;' and then, while Sir Geoffrey was making himself agreeable to Mrs. Arbery,

whom he afterwards spoke of as 'shaky—deucedly shaky,' and Susan left the room, probably to add a few touches to the appointments of the dinner-table, Mr. Arbery and Mr. Gayre talked, not merely about Mr. Temperley's hunter, but other equine matters.

At the meal to which they all subsequently sat down the conversation was general. It turned a good deal on Australia, and Mr. Arbery, who found much to say, and said it well, interested Mr. Gayre considerably with his account of life on a great sheep-run. He had three brothers settled in Australia, and one sister—all married. 'So, when I get back,' he added, 'there will be five of us out there, old married folks. If we could only induce my mother to come too, we should be as happy as possible.'

Mr. Gayre looked at Miss Drummond, who smiled amusedly in reply, while Mrs. Arbery said, 'I shall never cross the sea,' in a tone which told the banker this was a sore subject in the family.

'But 'pon my soul,' exclaimed Sir Geoffrey, 'it seems to me a splendid idea. Why can't we all go? What do you say, Susan—will you pack up and let us leave England together?'

'No,' she answered; 'like my aunt, I never mean to take so long a voyage.'

'I have asked her already, and she refused me,' declared her cousin.

'That is very true, Will,' she said; 'but perhaps, if you had implored me to share the sheep-run instead of helping to catch wild horses, my answer might have been different.'

At which they all laughed—Mrs. Arbery a little sadly, Mr. Gayre with a sense of relief, Sir Geoffrey delighted to find his old

favourite 'as saucy as ever,' and Will Arbery after the fashion of a person who felt himself fairly hit.

'No, Susie, it wouldn't,' he said, looking at her with fond, but merely cousinly, affection. 'You are far too much of a "bloated aristocrat" for Australia; you like purple and fine linen, and servants, and regular meals, and nice furniture, and—'

'I like civilisation, if that is what you mean,' she summed up. 'I think a sheep-run in Cumberland or Wales, or even Ireland, might be all very well; but I confess I should not care for it a thousand miles from a post-office.'

Hearing which declaration Mrs. Arbery sighed deeply, and Mr. Gayre drew his own conclusions. He understood there sat the wife Mrs. Arbery would have liked for her son, and he could not exactly understand why 'cousin William' had elected to go further afield, till a few weeks afterwards, when Susan was good enough to enlighten him.

'I don't fancy,' she said slyly one day, 'men usually fall in love with a woman because their mothers think the particular "she" will make a good daughter-in-law.'

After dinner they went out on to the lawn, which was perched high over the road, and where the whole 'way' might have watched them promenading had it chosen; then they wound round the house to a pretty trim flower-garden, laid out in the Dutch style, and from there Susan, and Mr. Gayre, and Sir Geoffrey, and young Arbery strolled down the pleasant meadows, in which the grass was being cut and the hay being made.

A stream bordered by pollards meandered at one side of the fields; large Aylesbury ducks

were disporting themselves in the water. Afar off, beyond the level marshes, rose the rising ground, near Sewardstone and Chingford. There was a great peace as well as a great silence in the air, and it seemed to Mr. Gayre as if suddenly he had left some old life of unrest behind, and entered a land where trouble could not enter.

Even Sir Geoffrey assumed quite a different aspect sauntering through those Elysian Fields with his hat off, discoursing learnedly with young Arbery about country affairs, or turning to speak to Susan as she and Mr. Gayre lagged behind.

'You wouldn't like to jump that stream now, would you, Susie?' he asked, as they came to a standstill at one particular bend of the river.

'No,' she laughed. 'I do not feel so young as I did once, and besides, this is wider than the Chell was at the Pleasance.'

'I am not so sure of that,' said the Baronet, surveying the sluggish water dubiously. 'Well, perhaps you are right. Lord, Lord! shall I ever forget that day when I was out in the Long Meadow looking at Lady Mary—do you remember that chestnut filly, Sue? —the prettiest thing, the very prettiest!—seeing you come tearing down the green walk, with Lal Hilderton behind you, racing like two mad things! I shouted out to you to mind the river; but you just gathered your skirts about you and took it like a deer. Gad, I never saw a patch upon it before or since! And, afterwards, you stood mocking Lal, he on one side, and you on t'other.'

'He did not follow, then?' suggested Mr. Gayre.

'If he had, he'd have pitched right in the middle of the water. Lal was no jumper.'

'Ah, but couldn't he paint, Sir Geoffrey?' said Susan, with just the faintest mockery of an Irish accent as she uttered a completely Irish sentence.

'Yes, certainly he was clever with his pencil,' agreed Sir Geoffrey.

'And who was this Mr. Hilderton?' asked Mr. Gayre, feeling really he could contain himself no longer.

'O, an old neighbour,' answered Susan carelessly. 'He was intended for the Church, but preferred art, and went to Rome to study. For the credit of Chelston, we hope he will be a great man yet. About three years ago he was good enough to come down to see us aborigines, and caused quite a sensation in a velvet suit and a red tie.'

'And all the ladies fell in love with him, I suppose?' said Mr. Gayre bitterly.

'I think a good many did,' agreed Miss Drummond. 'He really is very handsome.'

What a strange girl!—one who spoke of men and life and wooing and marrying as if she were seventy years of age; who addressed the representative of Gayre, Delone, Gayre, and Co. as if she had frisked and frolicked about Chelston Pleasance with him! How frightfully easy were her manners!—well, perhaps not so easy as indifferent; and yet—and yet who was the one woman who, since that crazy fancy of his youth, had ever seemed winsome to him.

Already he loved her distractedly; already he felt, on the slightest provocation, madly jealous. The first six words she spoke had not disenchanted him—quite the contrary. She was different from the girl he expected—stronger—a woman better worth loving and winning—a woman

such as, in all his previous experience, he had never before met, and—

'I think, Gayre, we must be seeing now about getting back to town,' said Sir Geoffrey, who, fond though he might be and was of Susan, felt the pastoral business, unenlivened by champagne and the hope of a dupe, wonderfully slow.

To this proposal Mr. Gayre at once assented. He felt that, whatever his own wishes might be, he and the Baronet could not stay at Granston House for ever; and accordingly, declining young Arbery's hospitable suggestion that they should stop and have tea, and ride home in the cool of the evening, it was finally settled their horses were to be saddled and taken to the back gate, where Susan undertook to pilot the visitors in ten minutes.

'The back gate is really the carriage-gate here,' she explained; 'only we have no carriage, and nothing in the stable, except a cow and a donkey.'

Killing that ten minutes—a process which Sir Geoffrey thought occupied about ten hours—they paused beside a Marshal Niel which ran over the drawing-room window.

'Give me a rose, Susie,' said the Baronet; and then, as she complied, added: 'Give Gayre one too. Now,' he went on, 'you must fasten it in my coat, in memory of old times. What jolly little buttonholes you used to make up for me at Chelston! Only look at Gayre—see what a mess he is making of the performance. Better let Susie take your rose in hand.'

Now, the fact was that Mr. Gayre had never in all his life worn a flower in his coat. Affection a severe simplicity, he eschewed jewelry, perfumes, button-

holes, and every vanity of latter-day male life; but not knowing what on earth to do with the rose Susan had given him, feeling he could not go about dangling it in his hand, he was, when Sir Geoffrey spoke, vainly attempting to coax it to stay in his left-hand lapel.

'Will you really take pity upon me?' he asked; and the blood came up into his face as he put this question.

'O, certainly!' said Susan; and, while fastening the stem, she looked up at him, blushing too, but with a merry light in her brown eyes.

'Gad,' exclaimed Sir Geoffrey, complacently surveying his decoration, 'they'll think along the road we've been to Broxbourne Gardens!' a remark which induced such an expression of disgust on Mr. Gayre's countenance that Susan laughed outright, and explained the correct form of bouquet generally borne home in triumph from that place of gay resort.

'What people will imagine, Sir Geoffrey, is that you must be a great rose fancier, and are returning from Paul's at Waltham,' she said; which suggestion of his brother-in-law being mistaken for a florist so tickled Mr. Gayre's fancy that, his good-humour quite restored, he joined in Miss Drummond's merriment.

'You are a bad, bad girl!' declared the Baronet, pinching her cheek. 'Come, now, before we leave, you must tell me what day I am to drive over for you.'

Then instantly Susan's manner changed. She didn't know; she was afraid she could not go; perhaps Margaret might be able to arrange to run down by train and spend a day with her: excuses Sir Geoffrey cut short by saying decidedly,

'Now look here, my girl, no use our beating about the bush ; you're huffed, that's what you are, but you needn't be. Peggy will be only too glad if you'll come and stop with us—not for a night or two, remember, but on a long visit. She's just as lonely a girl as you would find in London, and she has not a friend on earth she likes as she does you. Of course, you know, we are down in the world a bit, but you cannot be the Susan I know if that makes any difference.'

'I was sure the poverty touch would fetch her,' he said afterwards to Mr. Gayre ; and it did 'fetch' Miss Drummond so far as to induce her to say 'she would try to go and see Maggie,' if that young lady would write and name an hour when she should be likely to find her at home.

'I think I did that pretty well,' remarked the Baronet, as he and his brother-in-law rode straight down the wide Highway to Edmonton, cheered by Mr. Arbery's parting assurance that whichever road they took back they would fancy the longest. 'I think I did that pretty well, considering we had nothing but water at dinner. How people can drink water, as if they were beasts of the field, beats me altogether.'

'If you were on the march, and couldn't get any, you might change your opinion.'

'I might,' said Sir Geoffrey, in a tone which implied he did not think such a change very likely.

'However,' he went on. 'I am going to stop here for a minute to "bait,"' and, suiting the action to the word, he rode up to the door of the inn, where he had previously partaken of spirituous refreshment, leaving Mr. Gayre to walk slowly on and admire the prospect of flat country which

alone met his eye, look where he would.

'I feel another man now,' declared the Baronet, when he overtook his brother-in-law. 'Well, you haven't told me yet what you think of Susan.'

'She seems a very nice girl,' answered Mr. Gayre, coldly as it seemed to Susan's enthusiastic admirer.

'Nice ! I believe you. There's not a dark corner about her. I've known her—how long haven't I known her?—the dearest little woman ! I used to think it was a pity I could not harness her and Peggy when they were children; such a pair they'd have made—Susie in blue shoes, and my young one in red ; blue and red sashes, blue and red necklaces to match ; and later on, while Peg was posturing before a looking-glass—if you believe me, from six years of age she was always putting flowers in her hair and smiling at her own reflection—Susie would be out in the paddocks with me, or sitting in the dining-room while I told her stories.'

'Stories ?' repeated Mr. Gayre in amazement, wondering what sort of fairy-tales the Baronet's repertory contained.

'Yes, stories,' said Sir Geoffrey defiantly. 'I don't mean, of course, nursery-tales or foolish stuff such as most children are crammed with ; but good sensible stories about duels, and races, and shooting, and spins across country—things likely to improve her mind. Lord, how she used to drink them in ! holding her breath almost till we got to the end of a run, and holding the arms of her chair with both hands, and well-nigh gasping as I told her about flying over hedges and taking bullfinches, and all the rest of it. She'd never have been what she is if it hadn't been for me.'

One evening I made a great mistake. I don't know how I happened to get upon Dick Darrell, who was the hardest rider and the wildest devil I ever did come across. He was going to be married and settle down, and the young woman was stopping at Darrell Court with the father. Dick thought he'd have a burst with the hounds; and if you believe me, when I came to where at the last fence he went clean over his horse's head and broke his neck, Susan fell to crying to such an extent my housekeeper wouldn't let her go back to the Hall that night. Ay, it seemed a hard thing to take Darrell home stiff; such screaming and weeping and wailing I never heard—the old man childless and the bride a widow, as one may say.'

'What became of the bride, as you call her?' asked Mr. Gayre, with some interest.

'O, she stayed to comfort the Squire; and comforted him to such purpose they made up a match between them.'

'I thought as much,' remarked his brother-in-law sardonically.

'Where's your rose, Chelston?'

'Faith, I don't know,' answered the Baronet, glancing at his coat, and for the first time noticing the flower had disappeared. 'I must have knocked the head off as I was mounting this fidgety beast.'

Mr. Gayre smiled, but said nothing. On the whole he was not perhaps displeased that Sir Geoffrey had lost Marshal Niel, as he had already lost the whole of his other possessions.

Seated in the twilight there, it was of Susan Drummond, and Enfield Highway, and fields of emerald green, and a blue sky just flecked here and there with snow-white clouds, and the air filled with the fragrance of new-mown hay, that Mr. Gayre thought, as he dreamed his day-dream, and built fancy castles with towering pinnacles that glittered in the sun. Why should he not win and wear her? Why should he not marry and be happy? Why should she not come stealing to him through the gloom, and fill his empty heart, and change his lonely life into one of utter content?

She was young, very young, no doubt; and he was old—yet not so old, after all. She was poor, and he was rich enough to give her all he fancied she could desire. Women had figuratively torn caps about him; why should he despair of awakening an interest in Susan Drummond? She had no lover—he felt sure of that; quite sure the depths of her nature had never yet been stirred.

The twilight deepened; it grew so dark he could not see the objects surrounding him; and yet he dreamt on, till suddenly the door opened, and an old servant, who had been with him 'through the wars,' said,

'Mr. Sudlow, Colonel, wishes to know if he can see you.'

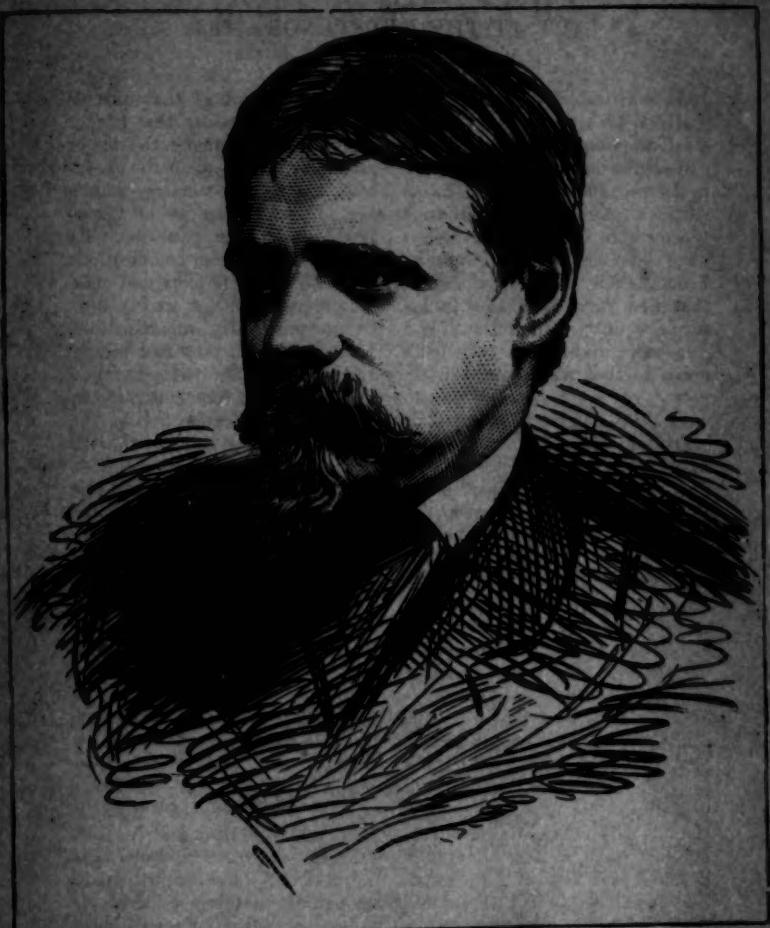
'Yes,' answered the 'Colonel,' coming back to earth and its realities. 'Ask him to walk in; and bring lights and coffee.'

(To be continued.)

ART AT THE GROSVENOR, 1883.

It is now twelve years since Alma Tadema, his strong claim to artistic distinction already established and acknowledged abroad, as well in France and Belgium as in his native country of Holland, came to settle in England, thenceforward his country by adoption. From the famous 'Pyrrhic Dance' that first introduced him to his future countrymen at the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1869 down to the 'Antony and Cleopatra' of 1882, second to no work in the present Grosvenor collection, the intervening years have been years of incessant productive activity on the part of the painter, and of steady corresponding advance in fame, with a public that, in particular, had reason for duly prizes his peculiar merits. Extraordinary technical excellence and singleness of artistic aim such as his were the more conspicuous for their greater scarcity among us. Furthermore, the manliness of his conceptions, nay, a certain austerity in their sentiment, were congenial to the spirit of a nation proverbially serious, even in its pleasures. Yet to a large proportion of this public, the spectacle afforded this winter of over a hundred and fifty of his compositions gathered together in one place, has come somewhat like a revelation, as to the calibre of the artist and the scope of his art. The present collection is far from being complete. It will be enough to name the brilliant 'Spring Festival,' the impressive original 'Fredegonda'—the triple panel representation in water-colour of

three scenes out of that queen's tragedy—'Down by the River,' and 'Sappho,' among the larger and more important of the absentees, the recent masterly painting of the 'Duchess of Cleveland' among the portraits. As for those smaller compositions about which both fools and wise men are agreed, the artist's store seems practically inexhaustible. Little bits of crystallised beauty and delight, after the possession of one of which your soul hankers, such as the 'Garden Altar,' the lovely gracefully-draped girl, with flowing hair under her evergreen wreath, striking her tambourine as she dances before the sacred flame; or her neighbour and rival, the 'Torch Dancer,' her fair head crowned with white blossoms, leopard-skin flung round her, whilst she bounds wildly among the rose-leaves that strew the ground at her feet; or 'A Mirror,' where the young beauty bends over the marble fountain to meet her own likeness, with no witnesses but the columns and cypress-trees beyond. The same hand has painted of such as many again as this room contains, and at least of equal charm. However, the exhibition is quite comprehensive enough to be representative. It has indubitably raised the painter's already high reputation, enhancing that popularity which the equably-minded artist neither goes out of his way to seek nor affects to shun. Such a result was in this instance inevitable. A painter whose work is thorough, and owes nothing to trick or mannerism,



LAWRENCE ALMA-TADEMA, R.A.
BORN AT DRONRYF, NETHERLANDS, 1836.

has nothing to fear from an exhibition of this sort. Not that when a vast quantity of the same handiwork is put before you at once, you are seeing it under ideally favourable conditions. But what here are the difficulties in the way of forming a fair estimate and deriving the full impression the artist intended to convey, compared with those that beset you at the Royal Academy, where the mass of the public hitherto has had to make acquaintance with these compositions? Artistic pleasure pure and simple is a commodity the most sanguine visitor can scarcely look to obtain from the fashionable exhibition of the year, harassed as he is there by a swarm of intrusive conflicting impressions. The more receptive and sensitive his mind, the greater the obstacles to abstraction, the more distressing the ordeal. Not to mention the crowd and bustle, and a certain restless, inartistic, society-journal, moral taint pervading the air, and that would infect the veriest recluse, there are over a thousand works of art to be skimmed each season; there is your disinterested anxiety to ascertain if your young friend's picture has been hung, or has escaped being skied; there are the claims on your attention of 'pictures of the year,' rather notorious than meritorious, but about which not to know argues yourself a novice; this work that was alluded to by a speaker at the Academy dinner, this curious product of an Academician who, in his dotage, has set himself to teach the young idea how not to paint. Then the popular beauty sits there on a sofa, to invite comparison with her portrait opposite, and divide your attention with it. Add to this the vicinity of a great quantity of bad art, too glaring in colour for its disturbing influence to be es-

caped; and those occasional freaks of (ill) nature on the part of the hanging committee—the juxtaposition of good pictures, that clash, as good things will sometimes, and that seem to have been thus pitted against each other expressly to murder our enjoyment of each, by their over-violent contrast in sentiment or handling. The yoking together of Mr. Millais' brilliant but showy 'Cinderella' with the severity of Mr. Tadema's 'Sappho' looked like a practical joke on the part of authority, and was, indeed, hard to account for in any other way. Moreover, every eight or ten years brings a whole new public into existence for a painter. How many of the observers that thronged the Grosvenor of 1883 were boys at school when, in 1871 and 1874 respectively, the 'Roman Emperor' (No. 32 in the present exhibition) and 'The Picture Gallery' compelled the admiring notice of every intelligent visitor to Burlington House? Thus the art-critic in our leading journal believes 'The Picture Gallery' to be now exhibited for the first time in this country, and post-dates 'A Roman Emperor' by six years!

An artist like Mr. Tadema needs no favour, but he needed a fair field; and the collection now on view, by showing society at large what he could do and was doing, has helped to dispel some popular illusions concerning him. The world had grasped the fact that he was an indefatigable painter of scenes of Roman life. Amid the flurry and confusion of the Academy, our eyes had lingered pleasurable on the mosaic pavements, the columns of red and black porphyry and giallo antico, the statuary, reliefs,—sculptured fountains so prominent in his work. As a painter of marble he

was, on the whole, incomparable. Hence to the conclusion that he could paint nothing else, so as to make us care about it, may seem a startling leap; but it is made without hesitation by the bold and agile mind of the omniscient amateur. We magnanimously accredited the artist with learning, research, and precision of detail; we took for granted what we could not deny—his combined powers of design, draughtsmanship, and colour; yet we did not associate his productions with qualities that give universal pleasure, with the poetry, beauty, and feeling indispensable to win the suffrages of that *rox populi* which has a certain Divine infallibility about it, indispensable to place an artist in the front rank. The catchword ‘archæological painter’ answered to the idea in our minds, and as an archeological painter he was classed in our judgments, and spoken of accordingly with a sort of tacit implication that it showed no want of soul not to care greatly for archeological painting, quite the contrary—and that for our part we did not. A visit to the Grosvenor of necessity modifies preconceptions of this sort. The visitor is soon caught by a fascination it needs no deep antiquarian lore, or special enthusiasm for Greece and Rome, to perceive. You pass from the richly-coloured ‘Egyptian in his Doorway’ to the lifelike, energetic ‘Pyrrhic Dance,’ thence to the ‘Fête Intime,’ and ‘The Vintage,’ that make you glad with those vine-chapleted men and maidens rejoicing, uplifting the purplegrapes, making holiday with pipes, and cymbals, and timbrels; or ‘The Siesta,’ where the idlers are reposing in the heat of noon, whilst the flutes play and the roses lie scattered on the table; you are charmed by that exquisite little

piece ‘Fishing,’ the beautiful girl erect on the marble landing, with fluted columns behind her; around her the water with its growth of cool green reeds, and lilies, crimson and white, floating on the surface at her feet, and the birds of prey flying in to snatch their share of the spoil; charmed again by ‘Hide and Seek’ and ‘A Pastoral,’ the young Roman returning from the sacrifice at the temple of Apollo, leading the yoked bullocks in his cart, the flute-player coming down the hill behind him through the fields gay with spring flowers. If this be archæological painting, you admit yourself converted to the same. It is not what you meant to imply by the term. True, there is a kind of boisterous beauty, a readily-apparent poetry and sentiment, after which Mr. Tadema never seems to strive. But love of beauty in nature, human nature, and art, is the ground ‘motif’ of almost all of these pictures; and you begin to suspect the fault was yours, if, in your haste, you apprehended their significance imperfectly. Probably it was the distinctly poetical temperament of the man that tempted his imagination—restricted by his Dutch origin, we will suppose, to subjects in actual fact—to seek these in a land and a time whose poetry and whose prose were more picturesque than our own, and to depict the feasts, the music, the loves, the homes, the joys and sorrows of the ancients, rather than of the present familiar age, vulgarised as familiar life is and must be by associations, a stumbling-block, often fatal, in the way of its receiving the purest and best artistic treatment. Pictorial art of the highest has mostly been exhibited in scenes removed from the society of the painter’s own time. Apelles painted the

heroic mythology, Raphael the School of Athens, the sacred history of Christ, Madonnas, and saints. Mr. Tadema's Dutch ancestors were content to exercise their high skill on tavern brawls and kitchen dressers, to reproduce the boorish life of the boors among whom they lived. He, imposing on himself a similar faithfulness to reality, selects from the real what seems to him better worth commemoration, the beauty and serenity of Nature, of refined, high-cultured life under a southern sky. An earthly paradise of sunlight, blue sea, and love ; of marble terraces and balustrades ; gardens where white Hermæ gleam among roses, poppies, and sunflowers ; richly decorated interiors, where gracefully toga'd, sandalled, fillet crowned men and women live and move ; reclining on embroidered silk cushions and couches, whispering love on marble resting-places open to the sun and air, sipping wine out of shining silvery bowls, weaving wreaths, bathing in rose-leaves—garland-sellers on the stairs of the Capitol, ivy-wreathed Baccanti slumbering on leopard-skins—nobles and artists contemplating their bronze and stone statuary : here are creations that add to our pleasure, not only to our information. We are lifted out of the present; and whilst the positivism in us is satisfied by the rigid historical accuracy of the particulars, our poetic sympathies are stirred by the perception of the loveliness in these scenes, and refreshed by their strangeness and novelty. Human life is the same in all ages, no doubt, but with a difference. We see here these Roman dames and girls playing with their pets, feeding their gold-fish, playing games, boating, and so forth, just as we might ourselves. But the spirit is far removed from the rest-

lessness, the 'fever and the fret' of our own time. It is in the union in these representations of ideal serenity, calm beauty, with realistic exactitude of detail in each special instance, that lies their peculiar charm and strength. These Roman and Græco-Roman genre pictures, preponderating greatly over the others in number, have come to be regarded as the painter's line *par excellence*. But the term 'genre-painter' is quite inapt for him. 'The Death of the First-born,' a composition whose interest is very much deeper, does not stand alone ; but alone would suffice to prove that the author, if an archaeologist in the second place, is a master of pathetic expression in the first.

The first painting in the list that strikes the visitor is the interesting portrait of the artist by himself, at the age of sixteen, on the threshold of his art-studies. The quiet resolution, force without fever, that characterise the face, are full of the promise, whose significant fulfilment appears in the picture close by, 'The Education of the Grandchildren of Clotilde,' which, nine years later, first brought him into notice. Whilst showing his special abilities as a colourist as yet undeveloped, his draughtsmanship still unequal, it contains the primary ones of power, originality, and thoroughness, evidence of a remarkable mind, as well as of a skilful hand. Full performance is reached ten years later in the celebrated 'Roman Emperor,' and sustained, to say the least, in 'Agrippa' and 'Fredegonda,' through another decade to the recent 'Antony and Cleopatra.' If it were permissible to regret anything that has had this work for its latest consequence, it would be that absorption in the study of classic subjects has withdrawn the

painter's mind from the early mediæval world, no less picturesque, that had once such an attraction for him. Even these Franks, barbarians though they were, came nearer to ourselves in their loves and their hates, their sports and their vengeance, than the luxurious, pleasure-seeking Romans of the Empire—nearer to us northerners, that is. It is in Italy among the Italians that we must seek a direct link between the spirit of Mr. Tadema's pictures and the present day.

His art enthusiasm appears in his constant choice of themes from artistic life; and his conspicuous success here is the more remarkable, as few manage to impart to subjects in this special line a general interest. He has done so in two of the finest works here on view, the 'Picture Gallery' and the 'Sculpture Gallery,' no less pleasing to the general spectator than to the connoisseur. We have among the smaller compositions Phidias exhibiting the frieze of the Parthenon to the notables of Athens, the rapt architect poring over his design, the sculptor working at his colossal Phœbus; and the 'Improvisatore,' the last more modern in sentiment, weird in its effects of keen cold moonlight and black shadows. The absorption of the musician in his song, of the listeners in themselves and their emotions, is powerfully rendered and very true to nature. In the 'Sculptor's Model' the dominant sentiment is rather a devout artist's 'cult' for beauty than a more human feeling, which is perhaps the reason why Mr. Tadema's 'Venus' has never been generally popular. There is no more perfect type of his work among the Roman series than the 'Audience of Agrippa,' with its excellence of elaborate design, harmonious colouring, and dignity

of sentiment. 'Ave Cæsar! Io Saturnalia' is a *tour de force* in every way. The garlanded imperial busts, the variegated pavement on which the fallen Caligula lies, the Ionic columns behind, the soldiery, and curious observers pressing forward, are so many marvels of minute painting; but no less remarkable are the dramatic expression and skill in composition—all this compressed into a space seventeen inches by seven. It gives, as it were, the concentrated essence of the style of art which the painter has made peculiarly his own. Mr. Tadema's rigid adherence to material truth is nowhere more evident than in his portraits. They are mostly unsparing likenesses. The slight idealisation in feature or otherwise which portrait-painters usually strive after he denies to his sitters. In return he doubles their characteristic expression. This in every case he catches with the utmost certitude; what his models fail to gain in beauty he accords them in intelligence; and as the flattery of portrait-painters seems generally to entail increased vapidity of expression, Mr. Tadema's subjects scarcely lose by his method.

From the realist stand-point, Mr. Tadema has been accused of giving us too much of the roses and raptures, the refinements and sunshine, of Roman life, and ignoring its darker features. However this may be—and we earnestly hope the artist may never be converted to the heresy of ugliness-worship now rampant—it is observable that in all his highest attempts the subject is sad, even sombre. Those fated Frankish boys Clotilde would train to vengeance; the speechless grief of Pharaoh over his son; the beginning of the end of the Roman Empire; the brooding of the be-

trayed Fredegonda—all are in a minor key. In all these the highest effect and expression has been reached without the conveying of a painful physical impression. The success of these ambitious conceptions is as remarkable as their execution, and all left to be desired is that Mr. Tadema should one day bethink him of adding to their number.

In passing to the interesting array of landscapes by Mr. Cecil Lawson, the visitor who has come to the gallery with the rational object in view of getting as much enjoyment out of it as he can will do well to resist the almost irresistible demon that suggests comparison. It is but a few years since Mr. Lawson made his mark among us. He was but thirty when he died not a twelvemonth ago. He has certainly left behind a good deal of work we should be sorry to lose, and the qualities present in it warrant the belief that the artist, had he lived, would have acquired those that are now found wanting. No one has ever accused Mr. Lawson of lack of poetical sentiment. If this plays too little prominent a part in Mr. Tadema's pictures, it is here even too paramount; that is to say, bent on giving form to an indefinite feeling, the painter often dangerously disregarded the technical conditions of his art, and has thus laid himself open to a torrent of adverse criticism not easy to confute. His handling is rough, his tints impure, his boughs ill-drawn, we are told; he has imitated the tones in the faded dingy landscapes of Salvator Rosa and inferior Dutch masters. But granting all this, what is left unquestioned is of rare value. One is reminded of the Positivist who denied the existence of the soul in his explanation of the universe. Cross-questioned, tested,

perplexed, driven into a corner, he was constrained to admit that—matter apart—there yet remained in his theory ‘a sort of a something.’ Deny every merit that you can to these landscape paintings or poems, there is left uncontested an element which, like that ‘sort of a something’ the soul, is all-important. Mr. Lawson's poetical quality is essentially attractive.

The note he loves to strike has no great variety. Moonlight memories, effects of rain and mist, for the most part, his pictures show rather a great spiritual sensitiveness to the obviously poetical aspects of Nature than a genuine observation of her works and ways. ‘The Minister's Garden’—prove the outlines faint, the painting flat and tapestry-like, if you will—has pleasurable quietness to preserve for it that place in popular estimation it won in 1878. ‘Strayed,’ ‘A Pastoral Trafalgar-square,’ ‘The Pool,’ the sketches in Cheyne-walk, and other striking landscapes and London lyrics and pastorals, are characteristic of the thoughtful townsman who dreams of green pastures in Piccadilly—perhaps a little of Piccadilly in green pastures. Less successful is ‘The Hop Gardens of England;’ indeed; for some cause, the beauty of our hop-fields has never had anything approaching justice rendered it in art. ‘The Voice of Cuckoo,’ taken as a whole, is virtually undefended, even by the painter's warmest admirers. The figures of the two children impress us each time we come back to them as an unpleasant surprise; and it is a pity that the work is included in a collection in which no other example happily is open to such serious condemnation. ‘The Storm Cloud,’ ‘The Wet Moon,’ ‘Twilight Gray,’ on the other hand, show us Mr. Lawson at his best

—a standard, we doubt not, he would have maintained and raised had time and experience been accorded him. There is something peculiarly English in this landscape-painter's compositions which endears them to us. They are English, as are Goldsmith's Vicar, Gray's 'Elegy,' and Currier Bell's pictures of wild, wet, windy moors, of which we are more than once reminded here.

Although of the two artists brought under our notice in the Grosvenor this winter Cecil Lawson has passed away from among us, and Alma Tadema is not a native, it none the less speaks well for the art future of England that she should have produced the former among her sons and enrolled the latter among her subjects.

THE SPARROW :

A Song for the First of March.

WHEN aged Winter, hoary king,
Low drooping on his frozen throne,
Sore smitten by the rebel Spring,
With failing gripe scarce holds his own ;
When, wrapt in garb of cheerless gray,
The Morning walks through chilling mist,
Yet wears a cheek of brighter ray,
Like one whom stronger suns have kist :
First harbinger of summer sheaves,
The Sparrow chirps beneath the eaves !

When pitcher-laden down the west
The Water-bearer wends his way,
And, sporting in unnatural air,
The gleaming Fish usurp his sway ;
While yet the blackbird's voice is dumb,
And thrush's many-tunèd throat,
And redbreast robins no more come
To cheer us with their wintry note :
First harbinger of summer sheaves,
The Sparrow twitters 'neath the eaves !

When winds are veering round to east,
And lambs have all the shepherd's heart ;
When snowdrops woo the pale earth's breast,
And tell that waning snows depart ;
When forth from coffin underground
The buried crocus breaks afame,
And that sweet nymph makes later round
Whom 'twixt the day and night we name :
First harbinger of summer sheaves,
The Sparrow calls beneath the eaves !

PEAKE BANTON.



THE LATE CEDRIC LAWSON (ARTIST).

DIED JUNE 11, 1862, AGED 30.

[From a Sketch by His Brother, WALTER LAWSON.]

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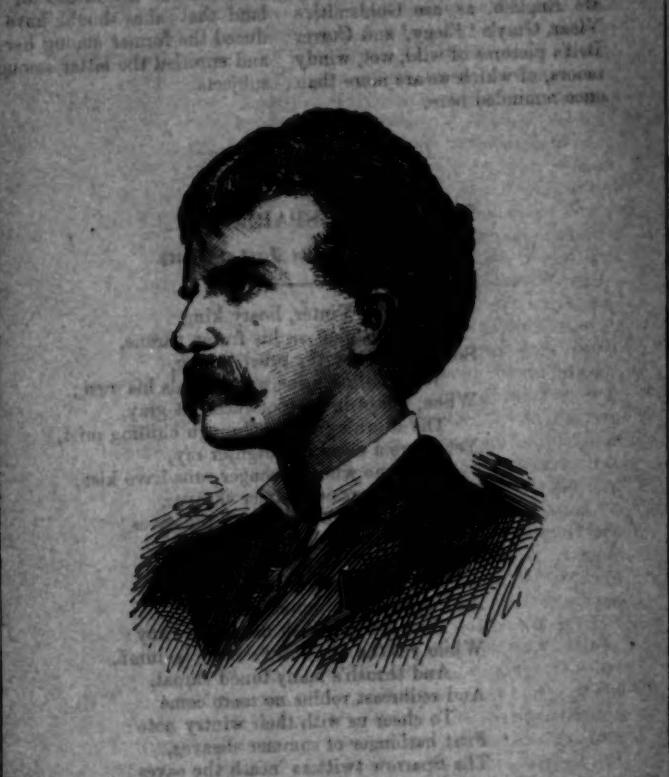
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PEAKE BANTON.

the world to himself. He had no wife or children, but he had many friends and acquaintances who had known him well, and who will miss him greatly.



THE LATE CECIL LAWSON (ARTIST).

DIED JUNE 11, 1882, AGED 30.

[From a Sketch by his Brother, Wilfrid Lawson.]

ANECDOTE CORNER

ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՎՐԱՀԱՅԱՀ

deux deux Jeunesse est dire belle
sauvage bergeron si modeste que
tous les autres à la fois est
dompteur est le plus grand dompteur
bergeron à bergeron. M.
Bergeron il est assez difficile de faire
un tel bon Bergeron et pourtant il
est fait aussi brisé à no bâton
et que nous lisons une excellente
affectionable personne et ce qui est
encore meilleure chose à bergeron
nous avons une bonne éducation à
qui a été fait au Bergeron dans
les établissements où le Bergeron
réside et bergeron bravo. M.
Bergeron il est également fait le
Bergeron excellent personnage
éduqué qui a bonnes et brillantes
études et il a été étudié à M.
Bergeron qui est une grande
dame. M. et qui est la plus

or si obiecte parțial sau
în mod similar împotriva
țărmului sau că în modul său
este totuști "parțial" obiectiv.
Dacă le urmărește și să îl
țină în mod similar la
înțelegerile său în modul său
înțelegerii său în modul său

translators and critics who have
written so eloquently on the
subject, I am sure that the
present volume will be welcomed
with interest by all who are
interested in the study of
the English language.

Classification of Viruses

•, n'itemm'vno le m'apo sali ni had
diarria sali has, n'oli le han sali k'waw
k'waw sali has, ni ak'waw n'oli
k'waw sali has.

between the odd moments of leisure,
and between those as in
quiescence, the imagination
drew across the view, and, passing to
other scenes, questions the stillness
and the silence, and finds
no answer; so, though it seemed
but a single one, there still lay
the silence, and rest, and quietness
in all and around. The rest
remained very long after, continuing
and continuing, in silent, mourn-
ful, reverent, and peaceful thought.

ANECDOCE CORNER.

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY H. T.—ALAN MUIR—J. PALGRAVE SIMPSON—
CHARLES HERVEY—EDWARD DRURY—SURGEON-GENERAL COWEN—
WILLMOTT DIXON—H. BARTON BAKER—THE ANECDOTE HUNTER—
THE EDITOR—AND OTHERS.

A Lucky Author.

THE following anecdote is so marvellous that I should not venture to submit it to the Editor of 'Anecdote Corner,' if I had not received it from a relative of the popular author, who became in so mysterious a manner the fortunate recipient of such unexpected wealth.

Most novel-readers have heard of the nautical novels of *Rattlin the Reefer* and *Outward Bound*, written by Mr. Howard. They first appeared between forty and fifty years ago. The first-named novel was edited by Captain Marryat, and became very popular. On one occasion Mr. Howard received an anonymous letter requesting him to be at a certain spot some twelve miles from London, and he would hear of something to his advantage. He com-

plied with the request, and the only satisfaction he received was the sight of a carriage and pair which drove away at his approach. Mr. Howard received a second letter, when the same result ensued. He vowed he would not be imposed on a third time. But his confidence was not again put to the test, as he shortly afterwards received a letter containing Bank of England notes for thirty thousand pounds! To the day of his death he never discovered the name of the mysterious donor. Mr. Howard married the daughter of the celebrated 'Publicola,' whose caustic writings contributed so materially to found the fortunes of the *Weekly Dispatch* half a century ago, under the proprietorship of the late Mr. Alderman Harmer.

H. T.

Two Anecdotes of 'Publicola.'

DAVID WILLIAMS (the celebrated 'Publicola'), being on one occasion at an assembly, observed that whenever he approached a group of people, they were all seized with violent fits of sneezing, and to such an extent that he speedily left for home in dudgeon. On relating the case to his sister, she laughed, and pointing to his dress-hat, made of beaver, said, 'Therein lies the explanation. To avoid any danger from moth, I peppered the hat well.' Publicola remembered he

had, in the course of conversation, waved his hat about, and also struck his person with it, and so caused the peppery particles to escape.

Williams was once at an evening-party in company with Theodore Hook. One of the guests preserved a strict silence, no matter what might be the subject of conversation. Theodore advanced and said, 'If you are a fool, you are a wise man; if you are a wise man, you are a fool.'

'BOERHAAVE,' says Johnson, 'was never soured by calumny and detraction, nor ever thought it necessary to confute them ; for, said he, they are sparks which, if you do not blow them, will go out of themselves.' And, says Cato, 'We cannot control the evil tongues of others, but a good life enables us to despise them.'

A True Story from Somerset House.

IN a certain office under the Crown, it was found necessary many years ago to employ a staff of foreign examiners, in order to translate the documents which were submitted in support of certain charges. An old German was seated with one of the Commissioners, renowned for his piety and courteous speech. The Commissioner pointing to a name on the

list, inquired what had become of him. The German replied, 'O, he is dead, and gone to h—ll.' The Commissioner, horror-struck, replied, 'My dear sir, you must not speak of him in that way.' 'Never-a-mind,' said the German, 'never-a-mind,' then in a mysterious and emphatic whisper he added, 'You wait—some day you will see !'

Not Too Far Gone.

ONE evening John Scott (Lord Eldon) had been dipping rather too deeply into the convivial bowl with a friend in Queen-street, Edinburgh, and on emerging into the open air his intellect became in a considerable degree confused. Not being able to distinguish objects with any degree of certainty, he thought himself in a fair way of losing the road to his own house

in Picardy-place. In this perplexity he espied some one coming towards him, whom he stopped with this query : 'D'ye ken whaur John Scott bides ?' 'Whaur's the use o' you speering that question ?' said the man ; 'you're John Scott himself.' 'I ken that,' answered John ; 'but it's no himself that's wanted—it's his house.'

Confess your (Neighbour's) Sins.

DURING the days when the Tractarian controversy was yet in its early fever, and the particular phrases of the Roman Catholics were in everybody's mouth, an old village woman, of a loquacious and canting habit, was very anxious to prejudice the mind of her clergyman against her next-door neighbour, Sarah Williams, for Sarah Williams received more of parish doles than this talkative old religionist thought proper. 'Auricular confession ain't right, sir,

is it ?' the wily old woman asked her parson, searching him with her keen eyes as she spoke. 'It certainly is not, Mary,' he answered. 'I thought not,' she replied, nodding her head. Then, her face gleaming with her malicious purpose, she went on, 'I was thinking yesterday, sir, that if auricular confession were right, I could tell you things about my neighbour, Mrs. Williams, that would make you open your eyes.'

A. M.

REMEMBER that if thou marry for beauty, thou bindest thyself all thy life for that which perchance will neither last nor please thee one year ; and when thou hast it, it will be to thee of no price at all ; for the desire dieth when it is attained, and the affection perisheth when it is satisfied.—
SIR W. RALEIGH—TO HIS SON.

Farce and Tragedy at the Bar.

We are indebted to the *Globe* for this good story of the famous Maitre Lachaud :

The correspondent of a German journal gives some of his recollections of the deceased Maitre Lachaud. He thinks that the famous advocate was the greatest master of comedy in France, and says that not a few eminent actors envied him his marvellous mimic powers. He was once employed to defend a murderer, against whom the facts were hopelessly clear. When his pathetic appeals and his tears—which were always at call when he pleaded before a country jury—failed to touch his stolid audience, he resorted to the most impudent piece of broad farce. Thrusting his moistened white handkerchief into his pocket, he demanded if the jurors were men, if they had human hearts, if they could bring themselves to condemn a fellow-man like the accused, whom he had credited with all sorts of knightly, if not saintly, merits. His eloquence was not merely fruitless,

but the jury responded to it at first with uneasy shuffling, then with biting of lips, and finally with loud and uncontrolled bursts of laughter. Lachaud, while flinging about his hands, had intentionally dipped his fingers into the great ink-pot in front of him, and, as he drew his right hand across his forehead, as if in an agony of despair at the certain fate of the accused, he left upon his brow an enormous black mark like a crescent moon, and drew other black traces down his cheeks as he put his fingers to his eyes to dash away his tears. Feigning high moral indignation at their conduct, he continued, ‘ You are about to decide whether one of your fellow-men shall be thrust by you out of the ranks of the living ; and you choose such a moment for indulging in cruel and thoughtless laughter. Is this extravagant mirth a fitting mood in which to decide whether a man shall or shall not die ? ’ The argument actually told upon the jury. The man was acquitted.

Two Anecdotes of Lord Dundreary.

MR. E. A. SOTHERN, the celebrated Lord Dundreary, was invited to two houses in one evening. One entertainment was a party of ‘grown-ups,’ the other of children. Sothern considered it would be a capital joke if he entered the drawing-room full of children on all fours, and pretended to be a bear. When the footman announced Mr. Sothern, the actor carried out his intention, to the no small amaze-

ment of the assembled guests. He had mixed up the two houses, and found himself in the centre of wonder-stricken ‘grown-ups.’

—————

Sothern gave a dinner-party one evening to about a dozen men. One of the guests, whom we will call Thompson, was late. They had just sat down to their soup, when a loud ring announced the

IF falsehood had, like truth, but one face only, we should be upon better terms; for we should then take the contrary to what the liar says for certain truth; but the reverse of truth hath a hundred figures, and a field indefinite without bound or limit.—MONTAIGNE.

arrival of the late Mr. Thompson. Sothern hastily exclaimed,

'Let us all get under the table. Fancy Thompson's surprise when he beholds a long table devoid of guests.'

Sothern's love of practical joking was well known, so that the company were not astonished at the proposition, and in a couple of seconds every man was concealed from view beneath the table. Sothern made a half dive, then resumed his place at the head of

the table. Thompson entered, stared, and exclaimed,

'Hallo! where are all the fellows?' Sothern shook his head in a lugubrious fashion, and in melancholy tones replied,

'I can't explain it, my dear fellow; but the moment they heard your name, they all got under the table.'

The expression on the faces of the hoaxed guests as they slowly emerged, one by one, from their concealment, can be better imagined than described.

Before 'Cram' was King.

In the days when George IV. was king, entrance to the ranks of the Civil Service was not fenced round with the educational impediments at present existing. A candidate was asked on one occasion, 'Do you know French?' 'No, sir.' 'Never mind. Twice two?' 'Four.' 'That'll do.' The cere-

mony of swearing in had to be gone through in those remote days. The Commissioner inquired, 'Do you understand French?' 'No, sir.' The Commissioner turned round to the examiner. 'How is this, sir?' He replied, 'It is only his modesty, sir.' The candidate passed.

Charles Mathews' Footman.

ONE warm summer day Mathews had a dinner-party at Highgate. There were present, among others, Broderip, Theodore Hook, General Phipps, Manners Sutton (then Speaker of the House of Commons), and Charles Kemble. Dessert was laid out on the lawn. Mathews, without hinting his intention, rang the bell in the dining-room, and on its being answered, told the man to follow him to the stables, while he gave the coachman certain directions in his presence. The instant Mathews reached the stable-door he called to the coachman (who he knew was not there), looked in, and be-

fore the man-servant could come up, started back, and in a voice of horror cried out, 'Good Heavens! go back, go back, and tell Mr. Kemble that his horse has cut his throat!' The simple goose, infected by his master's well-feigned panic, and never pausing to reflect on the absurdity of the thing, burst on to the lawn, and with cheeks blanched with terror roared out, 'Mr. Kemble, sir, you're wanted directly!' Seeing Mr. Kemble in no hurry to move, he repeated his appeal with increased emphasis, 'For Heaven's sake, sir, come; your poor horse has cut his throat!'—*Memoir of Charles Mayne Young.*

Men talk in raptures of youth and beauty, wit and sprightliness ; but after seven years of union, not one of them is to be compared to good family management, which is seen at every meal, and felt every hour in the husband's purse.—*Anon.*

'They didn't know everythin' down in Judee.'*

GINERAL B. is a sensible man ;

He stays to his home an' looks arter his folks ;

He draws his furrer ez straight ez he can,

An' into nobody's tater-patch pokes ;

But John P.

Robinson, he

Sez he wont vote for Gineral B.

My ! ain't it terrible ! Wot shall we do ?

We can't never choose him, o' course—that's flat :

Guess we shall hev to come round (don't you ?),

An' go in for thunder an' guns, an' all that ;

Fer John P.

Robinson, he

Sez he wont vote for Gineral B.

Gineral C. is a drefle smart man :

He's been on all sides that give places or pelf ;

But consistency still was a part of his plan—

He's been true to *one* party, and that is himself ;

So John P.

Robinson, he

Sez he shall vote for Gineral C.

Gineral C. goes in for the war ;

He don't vally principle morn 'n an old cud ;

What did God make us raytional creeturs fer,

But glory an' gunpowder, plunder an' blood !

So John P.

Robinson, he

Sez he shall vote for Gineral C.

We're gettin' on nicely up here to our village,

With good old idees o' wut's right an' wut ain't ;

We kind o' thought Christ went against war and pillage,

An' that eppylets worn't the best mark of a saint ;

But John P.

Robinson, he

Sez this kind o' thing's an exploded idee.

The side of our country must ollers be took,

An' President Pulk, you know, *he* is our country ;

An' the angel that writes all our sins in a book

Puts the *debit* to him, an' to us the *per contray* ;

An' John P.

Robinson, he

Sez this is his view o' the thing to a T.

* We embalm in 'Anecdote Corner' this famous squib by the American Minister. It forms part of the 'Bigelow Papers.'

SATIRE is a composition of salt and mercury ; and it depends upon the different mixture and preparation of those ingredients that it comes out a noble medicine or a rank poison.—JEFFREY.

Parson Wilbur he calls all these arguments lies ;
 Sez they're nothin' on airth but jest *fee, faw, fum* ;
 An' that all this big talk of our destinies
 Is half on it ignorance, an' t'other half rum ;
 But John P.
 Robinson, he
 Sez it ain't no such thing ; an', of course, so must we.

Parson Wilbur sez *he* never heered in his life
 Thet the Apostles rigg'd out in their swallow-tail coats,
 An' marched round in front of a drum an' a fife,
 To git some on 'em office, an' some on 'em votes ;
 But John P.
 Robinson, he
 Sez they didn't know everythin' down in Judee.

Wal, it's a marcy we've gut folks to tell us
 The rights an' the wrongs o' these matters, I vow—
 God sends country lawyers an' other wise fellers
 To drive the world's team wen it gits in a slough ;
 For John P.
 Robinson, he
 Sez the world'll go right, ef he hollers out Gee !

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

'Hear, hear!'

SHERIDAN once succeeded admirably in entrapping a noisy member who was in the habit of interrupting every speaker with cries of 'Hear, hear!' Richard Brinsley took an opportunity to allude to a well-known political character of the time, whom he represented as a person who wished to play the rogue, but had only sense enough to play the fool. 'Where,' exclaimed Sheridan, in

continuation and with great emphasis, 'where shall we find a more foolish knave or a more knavish fool than this?' 'Hear, hear!' was instantly bellowed from the accustomed bench. The wicked wit bowed, thanked the gentleman for his ready reply to the question, and sat down amid convulsions of laughter from all but their unfortunate subject.

The Nomination of President Lincoln.

THE night previous to the meeting of the Convention at Chicago, Mr. Lincoln did not get home until eleven o'clock. In the morning Mrs. Lincoln, who was of a most amiable disposition, remonstrated with her good man

at breakfast. She kindly but firmly informed him that politics were leading him into bad habits, keeping late hours, and drinking at the rum-shops ; that she did not like it ; she had to sit and keep the children up ; and 'Now,

THE proverbial wisdom of the populace at gates, on roads, and in markets instructs the attentive ear of him who studies man more fully than a thousand rules ostentatiously arranged.—LAVATER.

Abraham, let me tell you that to-night I will go to bed at ten o'clock. If you come before that hour, well and good; if not, I will not get up and let you in.' Ten o'clock came that night, and, true to her word, Mrs. Lincoln went to bed with her children. About an hour later, Mr. Lincoln knocked at the door. He knocked once, twice, and even three times, before an upper window was raised, and the nightcap of a female looked out. 'Who is there?' 'Me.' 'You know what I told you, Abraham?' 'Yes; but, wife, I have got something very particu-

lar to tell you. Let me in.' 'I don't want to hear. It is some political stuff.' 'Wife, it is very important. There is a telegraphic despatch, and I have been nominated for the Presidency.' 'O Abraham, this is awful! Now I know you have been drinking. I only suspected it before; and you may just go and sleep where you got your liquor,' and down descended the window with a slam. True enough, the next day confirmed the news that the best anecdote-teller of the village had really been nominated President.

A Definition of Taste.

JAMES BOSWELL called upon me at my chambers at Lincoln's Inn, desiring to know what would be my definition of taste. I told him I must decline informing him how I should define it, because I knew he would publish what I said would be my definition of it, and I did not choose to submit my definition of it to public criticism. He continued, however, his importunities in frequent calls, and in one complained much that I would not give him my definition of taste, as

he had that morning got Henry Dundas's (afterwards Lord Melville), Sir Archibald Macdonald's, and John Anstruther's definition of taste. 'Well, then,' I said, 'Boswell, we must have an end of this. Taste, according to my definition, is the judgment which Dundas, Macdonald, Anstruther, and you manifested when you determined to quit Scotland and to come into the South. You may publish this if you please.'—*Lord Eldon's Anecdote Book.*

Counting the Cost.

A GOVERNOR-GENERAL of India, in days of yore, once entertained a Maharajah at a grand ball, at which were present all the upper ten thousand of Calcutta. The Indian prince, who had never before gazed on dances of 'Europe muster,' as the phrase goes, was delighted at the spectacle; and, on taking his leave of his host, said, 'Your Excellency's tamasha

(fête) has found favour in my eyes—much favour; and I, your father, would be too much pleased to return the same compliment to you, my son. Tell me, my lord, at what place can I seek out and order all these lovely hours of dancing-women and handsome young nautch-men, and how many rupees does their master charge per head?

WE bring into the world with us a poor, needy, uncertain life, short at the longest, and unquiet at the best ; all the imaginations of the witty and the wise have been perpetually busied to find out the ways how to revive it with pleasures, or relieve it with diversions ; how to compose it with ease, and settle it with safety. To some of these ends have been employed the institutions of lawgivers, the reasonings of philosophers, the inventions of poets, the pains of labouring, and the extravagances of voluptuous men. All the world is perpetually at work about nothing else, but only that our poor mortal lives should pass the easier and happier for that little time we possess them, or else end the better when we lose them.—SIR W. TEMPLE.

Anecdotes of Foote.

MURPHY was repeating to Foote some remarks by Garrick on Lacey's love of money, as a mere attempt to cover his own stinginess by throwing it on his fellow-patentee, when it was asked why on earth Garrick didn't take the beam out of his own eye before attacking the mote in other people's. 'He is not sure,' replied Foote, 'of selling the timber.'

At the Chapter Coffee-house, Foote and his friends were making up a subscription for the relief of a poor player, who was nicknamed the Captain of the Four Winds, because his hat was worn into four spouts. Each person of the company dropped his mite into the hat as it was held out to him. 'If Garrick hears of this,' exclaimed Foote, 'he will certainly send his hat.'

Foote was generous to his actors, and much liked by them ; and he was much more considerate and business-like than some of his habits would lead one to suppose. An actress complained to him one day of the low salary she had from Garrick at Drury Lane ; on which Foote asked her why she had gone to him, knowing the salary she might have had

at the Haymarket. 'O, I don't know how it was,' she said ; 'he talked me over so by telling me he would make me immortal, that I did not know how to refuse him.' 'Did he so, indeed?' said Foote ; 'well, then, I suppose I must outbid him that way. Come to me, then, when you are free ; I'll give you two pounds a week more, and charge you nothing for immortality !'

'There is a witty satirical story of Foote,' says Johnson. 'He had a small bust of Garrick placed upon his bureau. "You may be surprised," said he, "that I allow him to be so near my gold ; but you will observe he has no hands."

One of Foote's pleasantries upon paying debts occurs in his comedy of *The Lame Lover*, in which one of the characters, Sir Luke Limp, tells this story : One morning, a Welsh coachmaker came with his bill to my lord, whose name was, unluckily, Lloyd. My lord had the man up. 'You are called, I think, Mr. Lloyd ?' 'At your worship's service, my lord.' 'What, Lloyd with an L ?' 'It was with an L, indeed, my lord.' 'Because in your part of the world I have heard that Lloyd

MYSTERY IN LANGUAGE.—All noble language-mystery is reached only by intense labour. Striving to speak with uttermost truth of expression, weighing word against word, and wasting none, the great speaker, or writer, toils first into perfect intelligibleness, then, as he reaches to higher subjects, and still more concentrated and wonderful utterance, he becomes ambiguous—as Dante is ambiguous—half a dozen different meanings lightning out in separate rays from every word, and here and there giving rise to much contention of critics as to what the intended meaning actually was. But it is no drunkard's babble for all that, and the men who think it so at the third hour of the day do not highly honour *themselves* in the thought.—JOHN RUSKIN.

and Floyd were synonymous—the very same names.' 'Very often indeed, my lord.' 'But you always spell yours with an L?' 'Always.' 'That, Mr. Lloyd, is a little unlucky; for you must know I am

now paying my debts alphabetically, and in four or five years you might have come in with an F, but I am afraid I can give you no hopes for your L. Ha! ha! ha!

'Never go to France except you know the Lingo.'

A YOUNG Englishman found himself seated at dinner next to a pretty and vivacious French damsel, to whom, by mistake, the butler had given no bread. Said the gentleman, innocently enough, 'Voulez-vous partager mon pain, mademoiselle?' 'Il faut d'abord, monsieur, que je demande la permission à maman,' replied the

lady. The Englishman wondered why materfamilias need to be consulted in so simple a matter as sharing a roll; but was presently informed that he had put his foot into it, as 'partager mon pain' meant in French nothing more nor less than house, home, and wedlock. He left France next day.

A Sensible Sultan.

THE theatre of a certain French provincial town was once in the very depths of impecuniosity, its company unpaid, and nigh upon starvation—all save the manager himself, whose versatile imagination and ready wit enabled him to obtain credit and fare well. One night, however, a clever 'utility man' managed to get a capital supper out of him, and to eat it on the stage itself. The piece being represented was Voltaire's *Bagazet*. There is a speech in it, where the Grand Vizier expresses in high-flown language his utmost attachment to *Bagazet*, and offers to sacrifice fortune and life to his

person. Great was the astonishment and amusement of the audience on hearing from the lips of the bejewelled and glittering Sultan—personated by the 'utility man'—the following *tag*, addressed to the Grand Vizier, played by the manager:

SULTAN. Are you indeed so devoted to me?

VIZIER (*somewhat taken aback*). Bismillah, on my head be it if I show it not! (*Sotto voce*: What the deuce do you mean by this trash? Get on with the part.)

SULTAN (*not taking the least notice of the whisper*). Well, then, most faithful servant and friend,

CEREMONIES differ in every country; but true politeness is ever the same. Ceremonies which take up so much of our attention are only artificial helps, which ignorance assumes in order to imitate politeness, which is the result of good sense and good nature. A person possessed of these qualities, though he has never seen a court, is truly agreeable; and if without them would continue a clown, though he had been all his lifetime a gentleman usher.—OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

I'll test you! Send forthwith to the nearest cookshop for six sons' worth of fried potatoes; for Allah is good, and knows that I have had no dinner to-day, and, by the Prophet, am hungry.

The audience roared, and would

not allow the piece to proceed until the tricky manager had procured from a close adjoining restaurant a *recherché* dinner, which they forced the willing and famished Sultan to eat under their eyes.

A small Distinction with a great Difference.

NAPOLEON III. once paid a visit to Baron Rothschild, who, having done his very best to entertain his imperial guest, and received encomiums of his satisfaction, cancelled his Majesty's obligations by the simple error of substituting the masculine for the feminine French article. Said the Baron, when thanking Napoleon for the

honour of his visit, ‘Dont je garderai toujours le mémoire.’ As our readers know, the word *mémoire*, when masculine, means *the bill*; when feminine, *the recollection*; so that Rothschild gave it to be understood that he held a pecuniary claim upon ‘the nephew of my uncle’ for bed and board.

A New and Happy Definition.

THE other day a certain foreign countess was interrogating her son's tutor as to Young Hopeful's progress in his studies.

‘How gets on the viscount?’ said she. ‘Wonderfully well, my lady; we are working hard at the sciences. The viscount is particu-

larly well up in chemistry.’ ‘Indeed! Ah then, Henri, my child, do tell me what is *dynamite*?’ ‘Pardon me, madame,’ interrupted the tutor, ‘but nowadays dynamite does not belong to *chemistry*; it is considered as a part and parcel of *political economy*.’

Medical Brevity.

JOHN ABERNETHY, the celebrated surgeon, was, as every one of his time knew, a man of the fewest words, and his professional heart warmed to any patient who was as curt in language as himself. One day a lady entered his consulting-room, and without saying ‘Good-morning’—two words saved—

showed him the index-finger of her left hand. Then the following conversation took place. Abernethy: ‘Cut?’ Lady: ‘Bite!’ Abernethy: ‘Dog!’ Lady: ‘Parrot?’ Abernethy: ‘Bread poultice!’

This was the extent of the first consultation. On the second visit the lady, without uttering a syllab-

HOW is it that some individuals, remarkably and wonderfully endowed by nature, come into the world geometers, astronomers, poets, painters, musicians born? Through what mysterious law, by what phenomena, do these privileged organisations reach, and often at one bound, and without labour, go beyond, the limits of certain other attainments? No one knows, no one can explain; but it is a recognised and veritable fact, nevertheless.—EUGENE SUE, in *Martin l'Enfant trouvé*.

ble, lifted up her finger. Abernethy: ‘Better?’ Lady: ‘Worse!’ Abernethy: ‘Linseed poultice!’

Then came the third and last interview. Abernethy: ‘Better?’

Lady (*offering fees*): ‘Well!’ Abernethy: ‘Fees! not for the world! You are a most sensible woman; you don’t speak, Adieu!’

A Valuable Dog.

SIR EDWIN LANDSEER is accredited with the following *jeu d'esprit*: The sagacity of several retriever dogs was being discussed in his presence. ‘Not one yet mentioned to come up to mine,’ said he, ‘and as thus: Upon a certain occasion I showed him a five-pound note of a well-known county-town bank, near to which I was residing. I rolled up the note, put it into my pocket, walked into the woods, hid it in the trunk of a tree, then strolled on for a mile or so, the dog at my heels. “Back, find, and bring, Trevor,” I said; and the dog was off like a shot. I waited, and waited, and

waited for a considerable time, but no Trevor. Presently, however, he came—but without the note. “Hi back, find, and bring,” I repeated, “or you shall know what stick means.”

‘But instead of doing my bidding the animal came quite close to me, and dropped from his mouth, at my feet, one after the other, five brand-new golden sovereigns. He had not only found the note, sirs, but had gone to the bank and changed it. The intelligence of my retriever eclipses even that of the celebrated pointer Mr. Jingle of Pickwickian renown once possessed.’

Clearing off Promises.

HIS Majesty William IV., on his accession to the throne, found a ready and economical method of disposing of the importunities of many an old shipmate. As sovereign of Hanover as well as of England, the Guelphic Order of Knighthood was in his bestowal; so when, say, an antiquated and long-neglected post-captain came and respectfully reminded the King of his former promises or nigh-

forgotten shipboard intimacy, his Majesty would reply, ‘Ah, ah! yes, yes! I recollect it and you perfectly. You *must* be rewarded; I’ll K.H. you.’ And forthwith the suppliant would find himself gazetted ‘Knight of Hanover of the Third Class,’ with permission to hang a little cross by a bit of blue ribbon to his button-hole, and had thus been royally remembered and dealt with.

HOW THOUGHTLESS!

WHEN I was only twenty-two,
And Ada seventeen,
I thought her temper, *entre nous*,
The sweetest ever seen.
'Tis grief to find a turtle-dove
Grow up a tiger-cat ;
But in my days of early love
I never thought of *that*.

Our young affection grew apace ;
Our future seemed so fair !
I thought she played with such a grace,
And sang with such an air.
'Tis rarely now that Ada sings,
And mostly rather flat ;
She plays but half a dozen things—
I never thought of *that*.

Twas not alone her lovely looks
That bound my heart in thrall ;
My Ada read so many books,
And understood them all.
But now she might as well be blind—
As blind as any bat ;
She *won't* improve her backward mind—
I never thought of *that*.

Her cheeks were like the damask rose,
Their tint from Nature came ;
Though Art, as ev'ry Cockney knows,
Can emulate the same.
And lately on my Ada's face
They both play tit for tat ;
It strikes me Art will win the race—
I never thought of *that*.

I deemed my pathway all serene,
With such a model wife ;
No care could come to cloud the scene
Throughout our wedded life.
Though Cupid wrecked my love and me,
'Twere sin to blame the brat ;
Poor little wretch, he cannot see—
I never thought of *that*.

HENRY S. LEIGH.

29 DECEMBER 1911

(X) *—* — — — —

Wij schreven vandaag 1911
in de historie van de wereld.
Wij staan nu in een belangrijke
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RICHARD WAGNER.

See the Sketch.

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